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A N
A P P E A L
TO THE
People of ENGLAND,
I N
D E F E N C E
O F T H E
C L E R G Y,

AGAINST THE
CHARGE, contained in Mr. *Robert Seagrave's*
LETTER address'd to the PUBLICK.

K

W H E R E I N

His two Material *Articles* are largely considered,

F I R S T,

The Method of obtaining H E A V E N ;

A N D S E C O N D L Y,

Man's Power in himself, or not Power, to be Virtuous.

Under which Head,

His Doctrine of *supernatural Assistance* is fully expos'd. — His
Notions of *natural Religion*, are prov'd to be subversive of all
revealed Religion. — And *Calvinism* demonstrated to be one
apparent Cause of *Deism*, or an hindrance to the reception and
spread of *Christianity*.

To which is prefix'd,

An EPISTLE Dedicatory, to the *English Clergy*.

*I will that thou affirm constantly, διαβεβαιῶσαι, i. e. confirm or
establish thoroughly, that they who are Believers in God, be
careful to maintain good Works, ἵνα σπουδάζωσι καλῶν ἔργων
ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, i. e. be studious or careful to make advances, or
stand before others in good Works—these Things are good, and
profitable to Men. Tit. iii. 8.*

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Not Dr. Flemings



A
DEDICATORY EPISTLE
TO THE
ENGLISH CLERGY.

Most Reverend,

Right Reverend,

And Reverend,



HAD no sooner gone through
the following Sheets, but I
apprehended a kind of necessity
for a *prefatory Introduction*,
which I thought could not
appear better, than under the

Character of a **DEDICATORY EPISTLE**
to you.

The

The *design* I had steadily in View, will in some Measure, vindicate my taking this freedom, although the Execution of it should be ever so unequal.

Among the many Objections that may be raised against what I have done, this may be one, *viz.* that the *pamphlet* I have examined, has nothing worthy of Regard in it, but is a mean, stupid performance! and that the *Charge* it contains against you, was beneath Notice. But I am humbly of Opinion, that this Objection will vanish, when you consider, that it is the *fourth Edition of that Letter*, which I am answering.

I could not engage sooner in this Affair, for Mr. *Seagrave's Letter* never reached me till this Edition; nor had I undertook the Task, but at the request of a *Gentleman*, whose great Humanity and good Sense, has rendered him amiable to all who know him; and of them, there is a considerable number of your *Learned and Reverend Body*.

It is, I am persuaded, a prevailing Sentiment among many sincere Friends to Truth, that the *English Clergy* gives place to no Body of Men

A Dedicatory EPISTLE.

in the World, (who call themselves *Christian Ministers*,) either for *Piety* or *Learning*; nor perhaps is there any *Church Establishment* preferable, if equal to ours.

And notwithstanding it must be owned, that there are too many among you, who instead of being meek and humble, as the *Christian Doctrine* requires, are proud and ambitious! instead of moderating their Regards to this World, seem to be wholly governed by Views to its Interests! who, instead of recommending the Precepts of our Holy Religion, by the exemplariness of their Lives and Actions, are scandalously immoral! I say, notwithstanding this, there are, *God be thanked*, many who let their lights so shine before Men, that others seeing their *moderation in all Things*, are excited to attend to their Doctrine, and to imitate their Examples. And these can with great consistency recommend that noble system of Morality and Virtue which the Gospel contains; and represent in a fit light the *sanctions* or *consequences* of Virtue and Vice, as having experienced the happy influence the tendencies of right action have had upon themselves.

But

But shou'd Mr. Seagrave's system take place, these friendly Teachers of men, must, if they act a rational part, lay aside not only *Preaching*, but all other instrumental parts of Religion; otherwise they wou'd appear to be guilty of that worst part of Hypocrisy, *viz.* a *religious mockery*! since if man cannot contribute the *least grain* to his own Salvation; or if he has no *ability* or *possibility* of believing, or of becoming virtuous, by the use of his *Faculties* and *Reason*, or by virtue of his Free-will; such *Gentlemen* wou'd think they might as well talk to so many *Stones* or *Trees*, as wou'd make up the number of their Audience, as to creatures of a humane shape. But upon a supposition that men cou'd hear and understand what their Minister said to them; when he had once told them, *that if their Salvation cou'd be ever attain'd, it was* **ALREADY EFFECTED, ALREADY FINISHED,** *even before they had done any thing, or were even born into the world!* The story being compleat at once, they need come no more to hear it, and if they did, it wou'd be of no manner of signification; for all they cou'd either do, or omit to do, wou'd in no wise direct the event, but it must stand as already fixed: And their obedience being compleat in
another

another, it wou'd be but an affront, to pretend to add any thing of their own, if they had any power to do it.

Besides, what *Clergyman* wou'd be able to impart any of the spiritual Truths of Christianity, unless he knew that he had this *supernatural Power*? And methinks it must only be that supernatural Power that cou'd inform that supernatural Power of itself; for to suppose that his reason and understanding cou'd be judge of his having that *supernatural Power*, wou'd be to make the *natural man* capable of receiving and knowing the things of God which are only spiritually, *i. e.* *supernaturally* discern'd.

On the other hand, when I hear you representing the great design of Revelation, to be to guide and direct men in the right use and exercise of their faculties; to lead them to discern that the due reining or governing of the appetites and passions by *Reason*, is to put *human nature* into its true situation; and that sincere endeavours after Piety, Righteousness, and Mercy, thro' Jesus Christ, will have the gracious reward of eternal Life, tho' it has been attended with many infirmities! when I hear you thus instructing your fellow creatures in the way to happiness, it gives me

an high opinion of the dignity of your stations, and of the great good your *Order* is well calculated to promote.

I doubt not, but you'll perceive, that this *Letter* of Mr. *Seagrave's* does contain *principles* plainly subversive of all Religion; for as much as he wou'd have the people imagine, that in order to your preaching *Christianity*, you must absolutely deny all NATURAL RELIGION! An opinion *sufficient enough* of itself, shou'd it prevail, to justify all the *cruelties, butcheries, and inhuman severities* that have, or ever shall be practised among those who are called Christians; even the *popish Inquisition* itself, that Monster of villainy and inhumanity, which only cou'd be begot, or with any front defended or supported upon this very maxim. But it must be own'd, that this *L. W's* scheme is so far very consistent with itself; for if *man* can make no use of his *natural Faculties* in the affair of his Salvation, he'll have no occasion to concern himself about *natural Religion*. On the contrary, the metamorphosed Being, the *Believer*, must be wholly actuated by *another, i. e. a supernatural principle*, call'd a *principle of Grace*, with which neither reason nor natural Religion has any more concern than *Belial* has with *Christ*.

It

It would be needless to tell you, that all the extravagant, hurtful, nay, bloody *Airs of Enthusiasm* owe their fury to this *old Divinity*. And if this be Mr. S's *old Wine*, methinks it is very musty. — But as musty as it is, he says, “ that Experience declares against *new wine*, i. e. modern Divinity; on account of its having no *substance* in it, to influence the actions of mankind.” At the same time, his *grand Scheme* has wholly excluded the agency of man, in the Affair of his Salvation. *Heu Pietas! Heu prisca fides! — Quæ (malum!) dementia? —*

Indulge me a little, whilst I express my Surprise that any man who professes the least veneration for the *Christian Revelation*, shou'd not see that the Author of it, is call'd the *Light*, and the dispensation itself, the *Kingdom of Light*, upon account of the discoveries of Truth being made in so clear a manner, not only in their *principles*, which are eternal and immutable, but also in the *particular application* of them; and that men, who honestly exercised their faculties in the pursuit of Truth, cou'd not but receive this Doctrine; whilst others, who prefer'd a criminal gratification of their passions and appetites, manifested, that they

A Dedicatory EPISTLE.

they lov'd falsehood and not Truth; and therefore refus'd to attend to *light*, because their evil deeds wou'd have been reprov'd, censur'd, or condemn'd by it. Which is a quite different account to that of our *L. W's* who wou'd have the *reception of the Gospel* to be owing to the impartment of a *supernatural Power*; to which eternal Life was to be annexed, and the disbelief or rejection of the Gospel, to be owing to the want of this *supernatural* power, and eternal damnation to be annexed to this, tho' man cou'd not in the least degree use any endeavour for the obtaining of it.

I am perswaded, you will not think that in those several remarks which are made on *Tindal*, I have wandred from the point; since if you do but observe Mr. *Seagrave's* 23d and 24th pages, you'll see, that he expressly mentions *Tindal* as one of those Deists, to whose sentiments he wou'd have you believe his Scheme is directly opposed.

The *Defence* which I now humbly dedicate to you, I have not wrote so much with a view of answering Mr. *Seagrave's* Letter, as to expose, in the best light I cou'd, those pernicious Doctrines it contains. — I know nothing
either

A Dedicatory EPISTLE.

xi

either of the moral character, or of the circumstances of Mr. *Sengrave*; nor have I had any opportunity of being informed.

What I have done you'll discern, I hope, to be manifestly on these Protestant Principles, *viz.* a making the *Scriptures* the *only* rule of my Faith; and of consequence, a proper disregard expressed to the authority of all humane Schemes and Systems, by which I have asserted a Protestant Claim to the right of private Judgment, as founded on the law of my make, and on the known perfection of my sovereign Lord and Judge, to whom alone I am in these respects accountable.

As these are the principles which the articles of our Church strictly recommend, and on which you your selves conduct in all your *rational* publick performances; so it is from this quarter that I presume this *defence* may plead some right to your PATRONAGE and ACCEPTANCE, — more especially, as I can with all sincerity add, that next to a fervent love for that fair and most conspicuous edition of Truth, and its success among men, *viz.* the CHRISTIAN REVELATION; a great veneration for your Order and Office has been my governing Motive, being fully persuaded, that the more
your

A Dedicatory EPISTLE.

your CHARACTERS are preserv'd from reproach, and secur'd from scandal, the greater probability of success will attend your publick Miniftrations.

May you in your several Spheres, walk worthy of your sacred Character and Office; and by your Lives, Tempers, and Instructions, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; that when the CHIEF SHEPHERD shall appear, you may be able to give such an account of your *feeding the Flock of God*, as shall entitle you, thro' his mercy, to receive a crown of Glory, which fadeth not away.

Is the hearty Prayer,

Of your humble Servant.



AN APPEAL TO THE People of England, &c.

My Lords, Gentlemen, and Fellow Subjects,



It is a point of so great importance, that you will readily grant it can sufficiently justify this general Address; inasmuch as Mr. SEAGRAVE

in his Letter to you has presumed to impeach the present state of doctrinal preaching in the Church. I hope that what I have

to offer in reply, will fully prove, that this Late Writer has not duly examined into the foundation of his charge.

The crime of which the Clergy stand indicted by him, must be owned to be capital: his words are, "In my apprehension, the established Ministers have suffered the cause of religion to die in their own hands; by departing from the old method of preaching, for the sake of a dan-

B

"generous

"gerous politeness; and further, by departing
 "from their first and original tenets; which has
 "given countenance to what is call'd *natural re-*
 "*ligion*, in such a measure, as to shut out reveal'd
 "Religion, and *supersede* the Gospel."

As I have cited the general charge at length,
 it will be proper to keep in mind the several parts
 of it, whilst we examine how he has supported
 it.

Ibid.

And he begins with telling us, "that it will be
 "found by a *diligent observer*, that there are not
 "only *Fashions* in the world, but it may be seen
 "there have been *Fashions* of religion, unhappily
 "led up by those persons, who should be sup-
 "pos'd in this point, NEVER TO VARY."

What can this mean? why the *establish'd clergy*
 have introduced *Fashions* in religion, who should
 be supposed *never to vary* in the point of religion.
 Pray good Mr. S. was this a standing doctrine of
 the Reformation? Could the Reformation itself
 have took place upon this principle? It surely
 could not; for if the principles of the Refor-
 mation, when they became establish'd, rendered
 the then received *modes* and *fashions* of religion
 INVARIABLE, it will inevitably follow that it could
 be no *Reformation*; but only a renouncing of one
 mode of *infallibility* to set up another.

P. 6.

But he adds, "Religion, from several incidents
 "which I shall touch upon in these Papers, is be-
 "come a *new thing*."

Ibid.

And again, "It is in vain to cry out against
 "Deists, and Infidels, when the Protestant watch-

"men
 "B
 "Pious

in Defence of the CLERGY.

3

"men have deserted their Post, and themselves
"have opened the gap to the enemy."

Observe, the Clergy are guilty of making a
new religion, and so of occasioning an increase of
Deism and Infidelity!

His next paragraph is very remarkable, "this
"consequence could not but follow, and, I dare
"say, was discern'd by serious persons a Century
"ago, when ministers take upon them to leave
"the Bible, and rather than with that are de-
"lighted in the curious fields of learning, ora-
"tory, pomp and power."

I shall not meddle with the oddness of the
Diction, but must observe how he labours to work
up the passions. *Bible left for learning, oratory,*
pomp, and power! the two former, viz. *learning* P. 6.
and *oratory*, he allows to be arrived at great per-
fection; but then he adds, *the true old Divinity is*
gone. It should seem by this period, that *learn-*
ing and *oratory* arriving at such perfection has dri-
ven away the true old Divinity. And one would
be tempted to think that *pomp* and *power* were no
great enemies to this *old Divinity*, by his excusing
them any part in this last charge. I indeed should
rather have thought, that the *pomp* and *power* of
the Clergy had introduced this evil, viz. of *leav-*
ing the Bible, where they have arriv'd at any great
perfection, much rather than their *learning* and
oratory. But I begin very much to suspect our
Letter Writer, of wanting to reconduct Religion
from the *Goshen* which it now possesses, into the
Egyptian

AN APPEAL to the People

Egyptian darkness from which it sprung at the Reformation, in order to restore his banish'd *old Divinity*.

He next proposes to prove that the Gospel is *really* lost, by opening two material articles, viz.

I. The method of obtaining heaven. And

P. 7.

II. Man's power in himself; or not power, to be virtuous.

"It was (says this Author) an universal belief among protestants at the Reformation, and the pulpit knew no other language, that *Faith only* is the genuine method of salvation: not *Faith and works together*, or works *more properly*, as has been held forth within 70 or 80 years past.

P. 8.

"This latter way is indeed no way at all; rightly considered it carries with it a contradiction to itself — there cannot be a mix'd way to acceptance: it must be by *Christ wholly*, or ourselves *wholly*; not ourselves in part, and *Christ* in part, with a view to make up our defects — the Reformation discern'd better, and the Scripture where it principally treats this Subject, I mean St. Paul's Epistles, declares otherwise. If by Grace (that is, by God's free favour thro' *Christ*, Election to Life arises) then it is no more of works; otherwise Grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."

P. 9.

In order to shew the fallacy of this doctrine, it will be proper to fix some certain standard by which it may be try'd and examined; and I think we may fairly expect that our *L. W.* must consent to the *Holy Scripture* as the only infallible standard: otherwise,

otherwise, it is more declamation in him to charge such sad consequences upon the Clergy's leaving the Bible, to attend to *learning, oratory, pomp and power*. And moreover, as he expressly says, "that Scripture is certainly the wisest scheme of Salvation." This being settled, it is no matter what ^{P. 12.} was the doctrine of *Luther or Calvin*, or the *Doctors of the reformation*, about the nature of Faith, as being (exclusive of works) the only genuine method of Salvation; since he himself tells us that it is not for man to form schemes of Salvation. Neither will it be any crime in our *English* ^{Ibid.} Clergy, should they in this respect differ from the sense of the eleventh Article of our Church, altho' most of the *old Books* for 150 years after the Reformation, *Fox's Martyrology, Jewel's Apology, or Brasen's Paraphrase, and Book of Homilies*, ^{P. 16, 17.} should all speak the same sense; these are all short of substantial proofs of this doctrine; except the doctrine itself can be found in the *Christian Revelation*; and the Clergy are to be vindicated in refusing the doctrine, if contrary to Scripture, from the VIth Article, which says, that, *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite, or necessary to Salvation.*— And Art. XX. that it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing, that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.— And not only so,

AN APPEAL to the People,

so, but the *Church of England* plainly disclaims all pretension to infallibility, in her XIXth Art. where she says, *as the Church of Hierusalem, ALEXANDRIA, and ANTIOCH have erred—not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith, so also the Church of Rome has err'd*: but it wou'd be very unbecoming a Protestant Church to charge these Churches with fallibility, and not suppose herself fallible! Nevertheless our *L. W.* harangues you, *the people of England*, as if the 39 Articles, and not the *Holy Scriptures*, were to be the standard of doctrine to a sett of protestant *Christian* Clergy. See his 14th p.—But I think no more need be said in proof of the Scriptures being the sole infallible guide and standard of religious *Christian* truths to Protestants.

Let us now examine whether this Tenet of our Author's be true, viz. that *Faith only*, exclusive of Works, is the genuine method of Salvation?

That this may appear with greater clearness, and in its true light, it will be proper to examine in what different senses the word *Faith* is made use of in the *New Testament*.

What is the Scripture sense of justification.

And how faith may be said to justify.

And first, *Faith* is spoken of as a persuasion of the divine power of *Christ*, or of his capacity of imparting supernatural miraculous power, and aid. So we read, *Jesus* said to his disciples, if ye had *faith* as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say to this sycamine-tree, be thou pluck'd up by the root, &c. It was such a faith as this, that made the

in Defence of the CLERGY.

7

the *Leper* whole.—In this sense, *faith* is mention'd Luke xvii. 6.
among the extraordinary gifts of the spirit;—to ver. 9.
another *faith*—*i. e.* the miraculous gift of it. It 1 Cor. xii. 9.
is also put for the profession of the *Christian* reli-
gion,—exhorting them to continue in the faith.—Acts xiv. 22.
It is sometimes put for the Gospel—testifying both
to the *Jews* and to the *Greeks* repentance toward
God, and *Faith* toward our Lord *Jesus Christ*.—Acts xx. 22.
And a great company of the Priests were obe-
dient to the faith.—Now preacheth the *faith* Acts vi. 7.
which he once destroy'd—Received ye the spirit Gal. i. 23.
by the works of the law, or by the hearing of
faith, *i. e.* by the hearing of the *Gospel*; or con- iii. 2.
forming to *Judaism*. Sometimes for a conviction
of mind that a thing is fit or unfit to be done.
So accordingly *St. Paul* says, that he that doubt-
eth is damn'd if he eat: because such eating was
not of faith, or, contrary to a persuasion of its Rom. xiv. 23.
unfitness or unlawfulness. For whatever is thus
not of faith, is sin. Here it seems to intend no
more than the conscious principle.

It is sometimes mention'd as one of the *Chri-
stian* qualifications or virtues;—gentleness, good-
ness, *faith*, meekness, temperance—and besides Gal. 22, 23.
this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, vir-
tue; *i. e.* more strength, or courage 2 Pet. i. 5, 6.
to this virtue, add knowledge, temperance, &c.—
now abideth *faith*, hope, charity.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

And sometimes *faith* is put for the whole of
the religious Character, see the 11th Chapter of
Hebrews throughout, and particularly *Ver. 6.*
But without *faith* it is impossible to please—

For

Eph. ii. 8. *For by Grace ye are saved thro' Faith; — esta-*
Col. ii. 7. *blished in the Faith.*

Let us next enquire into the Scripture sense of *justification*. Now by *justification* must be generally understood, an acquittance, or a being cleared from the guilt or demerit of Sin, or a declaration of a person's being set free from the penalty. — for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences to justification; — i. e. the judgment and condemnation, or sentence of morality that was introduced by one man, is, and shall be reversed by the doctrine and ministration of Jesus.

But then we cannot suppose that this justification can be unjustly applied; or that any one can obtain the benefit of it, without first becoming the suitable Object of this benefit; for this would be to destroy and confound the settled Constitutions of God, that *just Judge of all the earth*, who will do right! and who has expressly declared, that he will not justify the wicked. — *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the unjust, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.*

The word *justify*, is indeed made use of in two senses in Scripture; it is made to signify a man's claiming or pretending to perfect rectitude of nature, and as in no need of mercy at the hands of God: and in this sense *Job* pertinently asks, how should a man be *just* with God? in this sense there is none that doth good and sinneth not. But on the contrary, the *Christian Doctrine* has dis-

covered

covered an universal imperfection in the humane family, and has therefore concluded all under sin, obnoxious to the penalty of it; that it might discover mercy to all. In this sense, even *Abraham* was not justified by his works; we know that he lied to *Abimelech*; prostituted his Wife; and was justly reprov'd by him. Nor could *they* under the *Jewish* or *Mosaic* Constitution be justified by their works, inasmuch as that Law declared no abatement of the penalty, even for lust of concupiscence.—*The Soul that sinneth, or continueth not in all things contained in the Law to do them, shall be accursed, — do this and live.* Not the least relaxation appeared in that Constitution: for as much as no one of its Sacrifices had any efficacy in purging the conscience from dead works; and therefore it was, that altho' the Apostle, as a Jew, found the Law holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good in itself; and under which he had once thought himself alive; yea, had imagined himself ascertain'd of life by that Commandment, or Constitution; yet he, by a clearer view of its whole scheme, plainly saw, and found it to revive Sin, *ἡ ἀναρχία αἰώνου*, Sin, i. e. a sense of Rom. vii. his obnoxiousness to death, was arouz'd with new vigour; which before he thought himself to be very secure from, on several accounts, viz. as he had been brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, and been taught according to the most perfect manner of the Law of the Fathers, and was zealous towards God; and besides, had liv'd after the strictest Sect of the Jews Religion, a *Pharisee*; nay, was not

An APPEAL to the People,

only a *Pharisee*, but the *Son of a Pharisee*; so that he had all, and every claim to life that any *Jew* cou'd pretend to. But yet, he looking back upon that *Constitution*, saw no manner of provision for a removal of the sentence of death: — This led him to conclude a *Jew*, that trusted to that *Constitution* for eternal life, must be a wretched man; and cou'd not but excite *St. Paul's* highest thankfulness to God for the mercy discovered by the Gospel.

Why I chuse to read *Sin*, by a proper *metaphor* as put for the demerit or punishment of it, is, because the Apostle is best understood by such a reading; and it is no uncommon manner of speech made use of by the sacred Writers. If any should object against this reading, let him tell me what *St. Paul* means by that conclusion

Rom. vii.
27.

which he draws; *So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the Law of Sin*; if by the Law of Sin is not meant the *penalty of Sin, i. e. Death*, to which the flesh is subjected; for the *flesh*, consider'd abstractedly from the mind, is incapable of moral agency, and so could not be guilty of Sin or mortality; or in other words, *of serving the Law of Sin*.

I proceed now to consider the other sense in which the terms *just* and *justify* are made use of in Scripture; and that is a real, but yet a more comparative and limited sense; not as implying a perfect, steady, and sinless obedience to the *Constitutions of God*; but an habitual and prevailing regard to truth and virtue, which did properly

properly denominate them to be *just men*, and entitle them to the divine favour and acceptance, or *justified* them. Thus *Abel*, by offering a more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*, obtain'd an exprefs testimony from God that he was *righteous*, a fire from Heaven consuming his Sacrifice; and by it men were taught, that God looks at the heart in all their services and devotions. Nay, *Heb. ix.* God tells wicked *Cain* that if he *did well*, he^d should be accepted. So *Noah* is said to be a *just man*, and perfect, or upwright in his generation; and as such, he found grace or favour in the eyes of the Lord; who bids him, and his, come into *Gen. vi.* the Ark; for said he, thee have I seen *righteous*^{8. 9.} before me in this generation. So *Abraham* pleads *Gen. vii.* with God for *Sodom*, that he would spare it if^{1.} there were so many, or so many *righteous* persons in it. Now if our *L. W's.* scheme had been *Abra- Gen. xviii.* *ham's*, viz. That men can have no righteousness at all that can be a cause or motive of favour, or justification in any measure, he would never have *Page 9.* pleaded as he did: And yet I don't doubt but our *Author* wou'd readily allow, That *Abraham* saw *Christ's* day, or God's design of publishing that most excellent edition of his mercy which the Gospel contains, altho' he thus pleaded with God to save *Sodom* for the sake of ten *righteous* persons, which he hop'd might be found in it. We are told likewise, God said of *Job*, that he was a perfect and upright man, which is explain'd by his fearing God, and eschewing evil. And again we find *Job* declaring that he would *Job i. 8.*

Chap.
xxvii. 6.

Pfalm
xxxvii.
12, 37.

Prov. vi.
18.

Ezek.
xviii. 9.
ver. 20.

ver. 25.

Mat. v.
45.

hold his *righteousness* fast, and not let it go; which seems explained, by his adding, that his *heart* should not reproach him so long as he lived. To the same purpose, the *Pfalmist* speaks of the wicked plotting against the *just*; and bids them mark the *perfect*, and behold the *upright*; for the end of that man is peace. And *Soloman* says, that the path of the *just* is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Nor can any be more express against the doctrine of our *L. W.* than *Ezekiel* — who says, — that he who walked in God's statutes and kept his judgments to deal truly, he is *just*; he shall surely live, saith the Lord! The *righteousness* of the *righteous* shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. It is to these established rules of Government that God refers, as the foundation of his appeal; *Hear oh Israel, is not my way equal?* Which character of *just* as applied to men, is farther confirmed in the propriety of it, by our Saviour himself; who tell us, that our heavenly Father sendeth rain on the *just* and on the *unjust*. Now with what great impropriety must this be said, if one part of mankind may not as truly bear the character of *just*, as the other of *unjust*. Or if the one part can only be so denominated by *imputation*, but the other by *personal demerit*.

I farther add, that St. *Peter* was well assur'd of this as a truth, *viz.* that in every nation, he that fears God, and works *righteousness*, is accepted of him: which plainly prov'd, that men of every nation were capable of fearing God, and of work-
ing

ing righteousness: and that this their doing so, was the ground of the *divine acceptance*. So that God is no partial Being, he don't distribute his favours arbitrarily, or from humour; he is no *responder of persons*, any farther than their principles and actions are worthy of humane nature, and congruous to his constitutions.

Now if any truth be plain in *revelation*, this is a certain and evident one, viz. that personal righteousness or virtue, is the very reason, foundation, and rule of *justification* before God; by which I mean, *the only differing reason why one man partakes of the gift of eternal life, and why another is excluded*. So says St. Paul, that God will render to every man according to his deeds, — indignation, and wrath, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil — but glory, honour, and peace to every one that worketh good, for there is *no respect of persons with God*. Rom. ii. He tells the *Corinthians*, that all (both Jew and Gentile) must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things (*done*) in his body, according to that he has done, whether good or bad. 2 Cor. v. 10.

And he would not have his *Galatians* deceiv'd — for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; he who soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Gal. vi. 7, 8, 9.

By sowing to the spirit, he evidently means, an *uninterruptedness in well doing*. To this end, he had advis'd every man to prove his own work, that

is to say, in order to his having rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Agreeable to which he tells the *Corinthians*, that every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour. To put this point beyond all possible doubt, attend a little to what *Jesus* himself has said concerning it. And he tells us, that the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have *done good* unto the resurrection of Life; and they that have *done evil* unto the resurrection of damnation. And in that awful description of the last judgment, he has assur'd us, that the reason of the sentence *Come ye blessed*; is, their having done virtuously.—And the reason of the sentence *Depart from me, ye cursed*; is, their not having done what they might have done. And in his parable of the Talents we are plainly taught, as the grand moral of it, that in proportion to mens improvements of *what they have*, or their criminal neglects, shall be their reward. All which indisputably proves, that the world will be judg'd in righteousness. And therefore it is, I conclude, that *Faith* and *Grace* when oppos'd to *works* in the New Testament, can have no possible meaning, that can be subversive of this plain doctrine of *justification*.

I might here observe, that *St. Paul* plainly intimates to us this twofold sense of *righteousness*, when he describes the *Israelites* as ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness; and so did not submit themselves

Ver. 4.

1 Cor. iv.
8.John v.
28, 29.

Mat. xxv.

Rom. x.
3.

themselves to the righteousness of God; i. e. The Jews not attending to the *divine rectitudes*, tho' so often inform'd of them by their *prophets*, as well as by their moral precepts, that they consisted in *purity of heart and life*; and that these are the terms of God's gracious acceptance; yet they went about to settle and establish a righteousness of their own; constituted of *genealogies, descent, election, sacrifices, and atonements*! and so wou'd not submit to the *divine rectitudes*.

This was no doubt a *criminal ignorance* in them, since we find that the very *Heathens* knew the rule of right prescribed them by God, *Tu Socrates in Rom. i. 20, the rectitude of God, or the rule of reason,* ^{32.} which God had given them. And as this rule of moral rectitude which came from God, is laid within the discovery of reason, it follows, that to both circumcised, and uncircumcised; to men of every nation who keep to it, it becomes a *righteousness*, or they are justified by it*. And thus we may perceive that *Christ, i. e. the doctrine of Christianity*, is the most finish'd and compleat discovery of this *divine rectitude*; which is plainly discern'd by every upright *Christian*.

Com-
ch. ii. ver.
26. and
see Locke
on both
Places.
Ch. x. 4.

Thus am I naturally led to enquire how *Faith* may be said to justify? or how men can be said, consistently with what I have offer'd, to be sav'd by *Grace*? And I am persuaded that *Faith* and *Grace*, when oppos'd to works, are never intended either to destroy or weaken this universal ratio of man's justification and acceptance with God. That I may the better make this appear, I shall, in as

careful

careful a manner as I can, examine some of the most principal passages of *St. Paul's Epistles* which relate to this subject. In order to this, *Let it be premis'd*, that the *Jews* might have seen themselves incapable of solving that difficulty, *viz.* how imperfect obedience, or how humane nature with its limited and spotted virtue, shou'd meet with a reward of eternal happy Life? There appeared no proportion, when they consider'd themselves as in many things offending. But to compromise the matter, they had learnt as well as the *Heathens* had done, to commute with the Deity, by offerings, sacrifices, or ceremonial lustrations! Their Prophets had in the plainest manner reproved them for these things, by commanding them to wash, and make *themselves* clean; which they were to do, by putting away the evil of their doings, and by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well; and not by trusting to the multitude of their sacrifices, burnt-offerings, oblations, or their many prayers. And as *Daniel* advised *Nebuchadnezzar*, so they advised the *Jews* to break off their sins by *righteousness*, and their iniquities by *showing mercy*. Or as *Micah* represents *Balaam* as telling *Balak*, that the Lord wou'd not be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, or with humane sacrifices, as atonements for the sin of the soul; but the requirements of God, *were to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly before him*. The writings of the *Prophets* pretty generally shew that the *Jews* had run into an high opinion of external and in-

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vented services, as what would perfect their Characters, atone for their unrighteousnesses, and entitle them to the favour of the Deity; or in other words, this way they took for justification, or obtaining God's acceptance.

That this was a truth, please to consult our Saviour's first Sermon on the mount. He begins with recommending virtuous dispositions in the minds of men, as what qualified for blessedness; and shews what mistakes the Jews had run into about righteousness, in almost all his publick instructions.

Besides, as the Israelites apprehended that they were really under a divine Constitution or Theocracy; and as they did but superficially attend to the design of it, they might imagine that their external conformity, was sufficient to obtain righteousness.

To obviate the objections that may be raised against this method of stating the case, I shall now take some of those passages of Scripture under a more particular Consideration, that immediately respect the case before us. And it is said, Heb. ii. 4. *that the just shall live by Faith*, which is quoted by Rom. i. 17. *St. Paul; O jstus en arisais Chroas, i. e. the just by Faith shall live, q. d. they who obtain righteousness by virtue of a true Faith in God, shall live or be justified: and there is not any thing more manifest than that this principle by which the just shall live, is inconsistent with any unrighteousness, or personal impurity; forasmuch as the will of God is revealed from Heaven*

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against

- against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness: So that *Faith*, as a living principle, must be attended with reforming effects; as *St. Paul* speaks of it, *it must purify the heart* *καθαρίσας*, it must purge or make it clean; otherwise there can be no life, for he that lives after the *Flesh* shall die. The Apostle to the *Galatians* likewise tells us, that under the Christian Dispensation, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but *Faith which worketh by love*. Hence it is rightly called the *Faith* of the operation of God. And thus only can it be defin'd to be the substance of things hoped for, or the ground of confidence concerning them, and the evidence of things not seen.
- Ver. 18. Indeed *St. Paul* tells us, *that by grace we are saved thro' Faith*; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — It is worthy observation that *St. Paul* here does not intend to oppose *Faith* to moral virtue or good works; he only shews, that men by favour were brought into a view of eternal life thro' *Faith*, or the doctrine of the Gospel; which favour to men, was not the consequence of merit on the part of man, for then it cou'd be no more of favour. And that *Faith* is not here oppos'd to works, is evident, from what immediately follows, for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordain'd, *προκαταρτισσάμενος* made ready, evident, or prepar'd, that we should walk in them. The Salvation,

Acts xv.
9.

Gal. v. 6.
Col. ii.
12.

Heb.
xi. 1.

Eph. ii. 8.

Salvation, *tho' of Favour*, was not to weaken or relax the unchangeable appointments of truth.

It is very strange, that some men should so read this passage as to subvert the plain and most obvious sense of it! They would have us apply the *gift of God*, to *Faith*; and so would insist upon *Faith* itself as *that gift*, at which we cannot come of ourselves: Whereas nothing is more express than that *Salvation* is the antecedent to which *gift* refers. It is of favour, or by the doctrine of mercy that men are saved thro' *Faith*, or a firm persuasion of this mercy; for so says the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, *That without Faith it is impossible to please God, for he that comes to him must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him; q. d.* no man can ever be justified or approv'd of God, who is not persuaded of his beneficence, inasmuch as this persuasion is absolutely necessary to influence his temper and conduct in the path of Virtue. Now it appears plain from hence, that this doctrine of favour and kindness, was not the product of men's invention; nor was this Salvation secur'd on the foot of either the *Heathen* or *Jewish* imaginary merit, arising from their commutations, expiations, or atonements; but as of *Grace*, was free; and as such, the *gift of God*: There was no room for *Jew* or *Gentile* to boast; neither shall any that wear the Christian name, have the least claim to the benefit of this Salvation, unless they are modell'd and built up, by the Christian Doctrine, unto good works;

Eph. ii.
10.

works; for such only are the *materials*, the parts or materials of his building.

Chap. x.
10.

That the Apostle did not intend to convey such an Idea, as if *Faith* was not to be the effect of their own agency, will appear by comparing other passages of this great Apostle. He tells the *Romans*, that *with the heart man believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation*. And that he understood man to be an agent in the point of *Faith*, as it respects a necessary condition of Salvation, will appear from that dreadful sentence he pass'd on the *Jews* at *Antioch*, for not honestly attending to his preaching, — *Seeing*, says he, *ye put the word of God from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. Nor cou'd that true and faithful witness, the *Holy Jesus*, have declared that the unbelieving *Jews* *shou'd die in their Sins*, because they believed not on him, if he had not known that they might have seen the evidence, and embrac'd his doctrine if they wou'd.

Joh. viii.
24.Gal. ii.
16.Ver. 20.
21.

It may be yet objected, that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the Faith of *Jesus Christ*. — And the life I live, says the Apostle, is by the Faith of the Son of God; — for if righteousness (is) by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain. It cannot be doubted but *St. Paul* meant in this Epistle by the *Law*, and the works of the Law, the *Mosaic Constitution*; and men's observation of it not enabling them to discern a title to eternal Life clear under that dispensation: For had it done this, Christ had indeed

deed died in vain. Nor could the Apostle otherwise have gloried as he does, in being delivered by the Gospel from the body of his death. Nor so often in Christians being heirs of eternal Life, and in their having the earnest of that inheritance. The Apostle certainly cannot in these expressions of his to the *Galatians* intend a justification only by Faith, or a believing in Jesus Christ, or the Christian Doctrine, in opposition to, or exclusion of moral virtue or good works; for he makes these the grand ends of the Christian Doctrine, as may be seen thro' his Vth and VIth Chapters; and expressly says, *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

It need not be wonder'd at, that on this account, viz. eternal Life's being ascertain'd by the adventon, doctrine, and death of Christ; that St. Paul shou'd every where speak of this discovery of the mercy of God, with the highest epithets of esteem: And on the other hand, as contemptibly of other Dispensations. This it was that enabled him to fight the good fight, to finish his course, or race, and to keep the Faith; inasmuch as he knew, that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give him at that day. This made his afflictions to appear so light and momentary, whilst he saw they work'd out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: — This enabled him to exhort his *Corinthians* in that pathetick manner; — having therefore these precious promises, *dearly Beloved*

loved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And this it was that enabled St. Peter also to enforce his exhortation, wherefore the rather Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Nay, let me add, that *eternal Life*, and the assurance of it, was the *grand motive* our Lord used to encourage his disciples in their adherence to his doctrine. *I am the Resurrection and the Life: — And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have eternal Life; and I will raise him up at the last day.* So that if *eternal Life* had before appeared to have been the certain reward of imperfect obedience, or of a prevailing bias to virtue and holiness; we should find it very difficult to account for the death and resurrection of Christ: or how he cou'd have propagated his Religion in the world, under those circumstances which attended its first spread.

P. 9.

It were almost needless to observe, that the doctrine of St. James, and of Mr. Seagrave, are as different as light and darkness. Mr. S. says, "the place of works in a christian man's Salvation, is, that they are *marks and proofs* of Faith; they are signs of Justification; not the *cause or motive* of Justification in any measure."

Jam. ii.
20, 26.

St. James says, *wilt thou know, O vain man, that Faith without works is dead; — for as the body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without works is dead also.* So that works in St. James's opinion are more than the *marks and proofs* of Faith; they

they are the very *life and soul* of it. *St. James*
 produces a notable instance in *Abraham*, *seest thou* Ver. 22.
how Faith wrought with his works, and by works
was Faith made perfect.

Let us now enquire more directly how Faith
 justifies: and it does so in all men, in the very
 same manner it did with *Abraham*: He believed
 in the existence of God; and that he was a power-
 ful, wise, just, and good Being; and this his per-
 suasion led him to act accordingly; otherwise, his
Faith wou'd have been no better than that of
Devil; nor cou'd his Faith, without its proper
 effects upon his own temper and actions, have
 been imputed to him for righteousness; neither
 cou'd he have been call'd the *Friend of God*! we
 plainly see then, that it is by *works* a man is jus-
 tified, and not by *Faith only*. Ver. 24.

On the contrary, our *L. W.* expressly says, "that
Faith only is the genuine method of Salvation; — P. 7.
 "that no man contributes properly the *least grain*
 "to his own Salvation. P. 11.

Thus evidently does the *New Testament* and
 our *Author* militate.

But perhaps it may be thought that altho' *St.*
James is so express in the case of *Abraham*, yet
St. Paul is not, who says, that if *Abraham* was
 justified by works, he hath wherof to glory,
 but not before God: For what sayeth the Scrip-
 ture? *Abraham* believed God, and it was counted
 to him for righteousness. Now to him that Rom. v.
 worketh is the reward not reckon'd of grace, but 2, 3, 4.
 of debt.

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Can any man ever take it into his head, to think St. *Paul* meant that *Abraham's* believing in God, wou'd have been imputed to him for righteousness, if it had not influenc'd his temper and conduct? or that it cou'd any farther be imputed for righteousness, than it led him to conform to the known or apprehended will of his Maker?

Now it must be confessed, that had *Abraham's* faith in God took in the Idea of him, as only a rigorously just, and righteous Being! even such a one as wou'd only deal in the method of *commutative justice* with his creatures; then indeed to him (if he had work'd) would the reward have been reckon'd not of grace, but of debt: But this was not *Abraham's* case; — he look'd upon himself to be a Sinner, and as such, as standing in need of mercy; and therefore altho' he did as fully depend upon the performance of those promises which God made to him, as if he could have claim'd them upon the foot of merit; yet he view'd the reward as an act of mercy, and grace, and not of debt. * In this sense therefore, he did not work, but believed on him that justifieth the ungodly; and hereupon his faith was counted for righteousness. Thus I think St. *Paul* must be understood, if we would make him consistent

Ver. 5.

* Justification before God, or as it stands connected with *Eternal Life*, must be understood as the gift of God thro' *Jesus Christ*; for there is no proportion, and consequently no demand or claim to it, on the foot of imperfect righteousness. This I desire may be kept in view, in every place where I speak of this gift, or of the reward's being determin'd by the *personal righteousness* of any moral agent.

either

either with St. James, or with himself. And it will follow, that the *Scriptures* teach us to think that *faith* or *believing* can only, and no farther justify us, or be imputed to us for righteousness. Or, according to St. John, that *he that does righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous.* ---

1 Joh. iii.

How contrary is this to the doctrine of this L. W.? he says, "that there appears to him many reasons why *Faith only* can obtain Salvation. — God is *pure* beyond all imagination or thought. — The best *Lovers* are *imperfect* in their best performances. The *Messiah*, by his personal virtue, fulfilled the moral Law *perfectly*, instead of *fain*, and still *corrupted* man. By a cloathing form'd out of his righteousness, man may be sav'd *indeed*. Now upon *this* prospect, humane nature receives proper encouragement, and exerts readily its moral endeavours upon a foot of gratitude, upon a foot of thankfulness, and upon a foot of glorifying God before men. The Salvation of a Christian is *already* effected, is *already* finish'd, if at all, by Jesus Christ, even before men's works were wrought, or themselves born into the world."

P. 12, 13.

This paragraph is so very peculiar, that I chose to cite it at large, in order to give my reader a distinct view of it. Here observe the *proposition* laid down, is, *that Faith only can obtain Salvation.*

The reasons on which it is supported are as follow. "God is *pure* beyond all imagination or *thought*:" well, and what then? why therefore *Faith only* can obtain Salvation. Is there any ana-

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logy

logy or congruity here, *i. e.* does God's *inconceivable purity* prove that *Faith only*, or *Faith* as an unoperative principle, is more acceptable to him, than an operative *Faith*? We are told the very reverse of this, thro' the whole Bible. What does it profit, my brethren, tho' a man say he hath *Faith*, and have not works? can *Faith* save him? Yes, says our *Author*, it can; and *Faith only* can. — Nevertheless, St. Paul is more worthy our regard, and he says, not the hearers of the Law are *just* before God, (and yet *Faith* comes by hearing) but the *doers* of it. In that day, says our Saviour, many will say to me Lord! Lord! we have prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out Devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works! and yet they shall not be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven. These no doubt were *believers*, or they cou'd not have made this plea. But Christ tells us, *faith only* will not do; on the other hand, it shall *only* be such, that he will admit, who have *done the will* of his heavenly Father. Is it not very surprising that *Jesus Christ* shou'd not know so much of the matter, as this *L. W.*? —

James ii.
14.

2 Rom.
13 ver.

Mat. vii.
21, 22,
23.

Now whether shall we believe with our *L. W.* “that no man can contribute properly the least grain to his own Salvation; — or with our Saviour, who says, that *doing the will of God* will be to every man the reason of his admittance into Heaven? — Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.

I proceed to his second reason, which is, *the best Livers are imperfect in their best performances*; a strong reason indeed! how will this prove that *Faith only* can obtain Salvation? how comes such imperfect creatures to have such a perfect Faith? I have fully prov'd already that *Faith* has no value at all in our *justification* any farther than it influences to virtuous conduct; and therefore tho' our best performances are imperfect, yet they give to *Faith* all its virtue or excellency; and of consequence, this is not a reason that can support the proposition.

Thirdly, "*The Messiah, by his personal virtue, fulfilled the moral Law perfectly, instead of fallen, and still corrupted man.*" This is saying, what the *New Testament* has no where said, and therefore is, a *being wise above what is written*. But I suppose it is sufficient for our *Author* that he found it roundly asserted by *Calvin*, and some of his *Doctors* of the Reformation. Our Saviour always taught with the greatest pathos, or emphasis, the obligations of moral virtue upon all his followers, and never once intimates that what he either had, or shou'd do, would weaken or relax those obligations. In the most lively manner has he represented himself, as a pattern and example of all religious virtue! He commands his disciples to take his Yoke upon them, and to learn of him, for he was *meek and lowly* in heart; and that by doing so, they shou'd find rest. When he had wash'd the disciples feet, he tells them, I have given you an example that ye shou'd do as I have done;

and strictly enjoins them that they be benevolent and beneficent, as they would approve themselves the children of God. He adds, be ye therefore perfect, *in your measure*, as your Father in Heaven is perfect. Conformable to which he tells them, that for their Sakes he *sanctified* himself, that they also might be *sanctified* through the truth.

St. Peter we find giving the same account of Christ's design in taking Flesh, and submitting to the sufferings of humane nature, when he tells us, that bearing patiently *persecution* for righteousness sake, is acceptable to God: For, says he, even hereunto were you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an *example*, that we should follow his steps; who did no Sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was revil'd, revil'd not again: When he suffer'd, he threatned not, but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously; who his own self bare our Sins in his own body on the Tree, that we being dead to sin, shou'd live unto *righteousness*, by whose stripes, or stripe, τῶ μάλῳπι αὐτοῦ, ye were healed: (*i. e.* restored from your wandring) For

1 Pet. ii.

20, 21,

22, 23,

24, 25.

ye were as sheep going astray, but ye are now return'd to the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls.

This doctrine is infinitely different from our *Antibar's*; the end of Christ's obedience and personal virtue, was not to render unnecessary the *obedience* and *virtue* of men; nor to be put in the place and stead of theirs. The very supposition of men's being justified *gratis*, freely, or of the
mercy

mercy of God, condemns this notion, as weak, monstrous, and absurd. For cou'd it be supposed that Christ's personal virtue or obedience cou'd, and actually was, put in the place of ours; this wou'd suppose, that God had made no abatement of his demand of perfect obedience; and that by his making that ours, we are by *imputation* yet in a state of innocency; whereas the Gospel has declared all guilty, that God might *have mercy upon all*. But he wou'd have no mercy upon any, if no abatement was made of the most rigorous demand upon human nature. Christ has indeed bore punishment in our likeness, and suffered death as if he had been a Sinner, but it was with the most noble views, *viz.* that we seeing his excellent and godlike example, might die to Sin, and live to Righteousness; have the disorders of our minds cur'd by his *steepe* or stroke, and by a steady view of him, be influenced to run with patience and constancy the race he has by his doctrine and example mark'd out for us.

My *Author* adds, "*by a cloathing form'd out of his righteousness, man may be saved indeed.*"

As this depends upon his former reason, I am of opinion that it will have no manner of foundation, if that is expung'd (as I think it is) from any place either in reason or revelation.

But our *Author* adds, "*that upon this prospect, human nature receives proper encouragement, and exerts readily its moral endeavours upon a foot of gratitude, upon a foot of thankfulness, upon a foot of glorifying God before men.*" This seems to be

a piece of mere enthusiastical jargon. It has no footing in common sense; for if the perfect personal virtue of the Messiah, and a cloathing form'd out of his righteousness, is necessarily to be applied and imputed to every man, in order to his being saved *indeed*; how does it appear that humane nature does receive hereby proper encouragement, to exert its *moral endeavours* upon a foot of gratitude, upon a foot of thankfulness, upon a foot of glorifying God before men? It cannot be, inasmuch as our *Author* adds, that "the Salvation of a Christian is *already* effected, *is already* finished, if at all by Jesus Christ, even before men's works were wrought, or themselves born into the world." Now upon this *Gentleman's* own Scheme, to say that humane nature is hereby encourag'd to exert *moral endeavours*, is entirely wrong; inasmuch, as he himself says, "that he cannot but think that *natural Religion* ought absolutely to be denied." Besides, these moral endeavours are a kind of work of *Supererogation*, and men would be as effectually saved without them; nay, they must know that they should be so saved, else how would they in this *L. W.* sense, have this *proper encouragement*? and how exert readily their *moral endeavours*?

P. 24.

Nor do I see, how their doing this upon a foot of gratitude, upon a foot of thankfulness, upon a foot of glorifying God before men, does appear with any propriety. Does it not seem as if our *Author* was instructing us in those *pharisaical* practices which our Saviour condemn'd. On

* Luke
xviii. 11.
compare
with Mat.
vi. 1, 5.

On the other hand, if this scheme of our Author's was the Christian scheme of Salvation, it appears to me that all obligations to virtue and goodness, piety and holiness, wou'd be wholly enervated; inasmuch, as man appears to be no agent at all in the affair of his own Salvation: More especially, as this will be a necessary consequence, that no man having any possible merit or fitness of his own, to which he can attain of himself, it must be an arbitrary act in the Deity, to give me a *cloathing* form'd out of Christ's Righteousness, who am no more fit for it than any other that has it not: Nor cou'd I, if I was one of the number so cloathed, know how to vindicate the divine conduct, being assur'd that there were no difference in the worthiness or fitness of the objects of his saving goodness: Nor cou'd I, if at the same time I shou'd be convinc'd, that any one individual of the whole humane family, was unconditionally rejected, or, damned! I cou'd not, I say, reconcile *this* to the known perfections of of a wise, a just, and a good Governor.

This doctrine of *unconditional election*, if it had any place in the *New Testament*, would expose that otherwise most noble system of Truth, to the abhorrence, as well as contempt of every rational and intelligent Being. But on the contrary, I will venture to assert, that if the *New Testament* be a consistent system of Truths, it cannot be found there; neither is it, as may be easily deduced from the concurrent terms or conditions of *acceptance*, *final*

final justification, and reward, which I have already largely recited.

That known description of God's electing the person, and posterity of *Jacob*, and preferring them to *Esau*; and those high metaphors made use of, was a very proper method of address in *St. Paul*, who well knew how strongly the *Jews* were prejudiced in favour of their descent from *Abraham*: But then if this had had any reference to *eternal Salvation*, or even to an unconditional choice of them (exclusive of others) for perpetuity; with what propriety could he have cited *Osée*, as saying, I will call them my people which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved? — and *again*, cou'd he have said of this very elected chosen people, even of *Israel*, that they had followed after righteousness, and yet had not attained to the Law of righteousness; and that too, because they sought it not by *Faith*, but by the works of the Law? Strange! and incredible! that if the *election* of this people had a reference to *eternal Life*, it shou'd not be able to secure it to them. But that they shou'd notwithstanding such election, be capable of falling short of righteousness or justification before God: which it is expressly said of them that they were; and that too, because they made not use of the means or methods of obtaining righteousness. The Apostle knew well enough that he had in the same *Letter* to the *Romans* told them, That there is no respect of persons with God, in point of *justification*, or *final acceptance*; but that at the day of the

Rom. ix.

Rom. ii.

11.

the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, he will render to every man according to his Deeds; which manifestly contradicts the doctrine of absolute and unconditional election. And how this *L. W.* will reconcile it to his notion of the elect having perfectly fulfilled the moral Law in the person of Christ, I cannot see. Of this I am well assured, that if that be the case, and that the "Salvation of a Christian is already effected, is already finished, if at all by Jesus Christ, even before men's works were wrought, or themselves born into the world." If this I say be the case, then election to life arises not from God's free favour thro' Christ, as our author asserts. P. 11, 13. P. 9.

And for as much as the Salvation of a Christian is already effected in his substitute, *i. e.* in Christ, the demands of justice are fully answer'd, and his title to Life, is no more of grace, but of works. This would leave no manner of foundation, for a foot of thankfulness, a foot of gratitude, a foot of glorifying God before men. For let my *Author* tell his opinion to any man, *viz.* that he is not at last to be justified or made happy, but on the account of what another has done; that he was in debt to God his maker, but he would not make abatement of one farthing of it, and rigorously insisted upon the whole payment; that he indeed had nothing to pay, but his Creditor found out one that was able to pay, and did actually pay it. How will this Gentleman glorify his Creditor before men? Will not every man say in reply, indeed the Creditor did you some service.

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vice in finding out one to pay the debt, but this will not prove any lenity or compassion, or mercy in him, if he took the whole of his demand. It will discover the mercy and love of the *surety*, or *obligor*, but not of the *obligee*, who made no abatement. On the contrary,

Will not this effectually destroy the *foundation*, or *reason* of thankfulness to that original source of all good, viz. the God and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ; even the God and FATHER of him, the end of whose giving himself for our sins, was, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our FATHER. To whom be glory for ever and ever! amen.

But *further*, "If man's salvation be this way effected and finished, in order to *humane nature's* receiving proper encouragement, and exerting readily its moral endeavours on the foot of gratitude, — of thankfulness, — of glorifying God before men," it must be allow'd as a fair consequence, that no *individual* is excluded the benefit of this *salvation*; inasmuch, as no *one* has or can have a prior claim to *another*: it being *effected* and *finish'd* before men's works were wrought, or themselves born into the world. Besides, "as no man contributes properly the *last grain* to his own *salvation*;" It would be such an act of *partiality*, and *injustice* in the divine Being, to prefer one to another, that was this the case, instead of telling this before men, in order to recommend and exalt their notions of the Deity, it would oblige them

them to look upon him as the most capricious, unreasonable, and immoral Being in the universe; and strongly incline them to esteem both the Gospel, and all the preaching of it, as a manifest piece of vain, idle, stupid cant, and prophane mockery! For if man's salvation is *thus effected*, and *thus finished*, as our *Author* says it is, and if no man contributes properly the *least grain* to his own salvation; if thus the fates of men are to be finally determin'd, there is no such thing as *vice* and *virtue* in the world; man is no longer an accountable creature for his conduct; and a *Nero* has as great a right to be clothed with this righteousness, by which he may be sav'd indeed, as a *Socrates*, who may be deny'd the cloathing, and so be damn'd! — This *Author's* scheme of salvation may also intimate a difference in the term or condition of the salvation of men who have been born into the world since Christ fulfilled the moral Law perfectly, and those that died before he had done it; inasmuch, as the salvation was effected and finish'd *before* men were born, or their works wrought, in one case; and *after* in the other. However, that it may appear the more plausible, he tells us, "That such language (as his doctrine of "salvation requires) yeilded real incouragement "to an audience. It convey'd no confused, but a "distinct Idea. In brief, that it render'd salvati- "on a *practicable* matter, which modern preaching "makes a Thing impracticable."

P. 11.

One would imagine this was wholly upon the burlesque, and had nothing of the solid in it;

especially when we consider what he immediately refers to, *viz.* that Christ was the compleat end and fulfiller of the Law, — and that no man contributes properly the *least grain* to his own salvation. How does this make salvation a *practicable matter*, when his *scheme* expressly declares men to be no agents at all in the affair? This, if offered seriously, and in earnest, is a most stupid description of the subject, and an unpardonable affront to common sense! what real encouragement could these doctrines give to an audience? or to what could they be encouraged? not to diligence and care in working out their salvation, because this was done already. And as they could not contribute the *least grain* if they were to have attempted it: It could encourage to nothing, if carefully viewed in the light he has put it, but *licentiousness* and *presumption*.

Having gone through the *first* general Design of our Author's Letter, *viz.* the method of obtaining Heaven. I proceed to consider that *second* general which he has opened, *viz.* "Man's power in himself, or not power to be virtuous. This he calls a material point, wherein the Clergy have fallen away, both from the *Doctrines of the Reformation*, and their own *Articles*, by ascribing to man a power of being virtuous, by the strength of his own Reason, and Free-will."

To prove one part of his charge, he cites *Article the 10th of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND: of Free-will.*

The

The defence I shall offer for the Clergy in this point, as respecting the Article of *Free Will* to which they have subscribed; shall be much the same I offer'd for them under the former Article; viz. that altho' they should see reason to differ from the sense of this or some other Articles, yet the doctrine of the vith, xixth, and xxth Articles, shew, that the only infallible rule to which she refers her members, as doctrines of Faith thought requisite or necessary to Salvation, is the *Holy Scriptures*. And expressly declares, "that it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing, that is contrary to God's word written; and not only ought not the Church to decree any thing against *holy writ*, but besides the same, ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

Can any thing be more express than these articles for a man's making the Scriptures the rule of his faith? But the misfortune is, our L. W. seems much more willing to make the old divinity of *Luther, Calvin*, and the Reformers, the fixed standard of doctrine to our Clergy, than the Bible that standard. This is his *old Fashion* in Religion, from P. 5. which the Clergy shou'd be suppos'd never to vary.

Let us attend a little to his harangue upon this point, of man's power in himself, or not power, to be virtuous. And he says, that from the main drift and design of the Clergy upon this subject, viz. of *Free Will*, "an Audience is led to apprehend, that every person may be converted, and come into belief, and into virtue, by the use of his

“ his faculties and reason : By which representa-
 “ tion, the doctrine of supernatural Assistance, has
 “ been exploded, and is look’d upon as little better
 “ than Cant and Enthusiasm. This has driven
 “ the old doctrine into corners ; which, in his
 “ humble opinion, he tells us, is the only real
 “ foundation of true Religion. For if humane
 “ nature by virtue of free will has an ability, or
 “ Possibility of believing, and of being virtuous,
 “ let the upholders of the new system, render a
 “ Reason why mankind is not more believing,
 “ and more virtuous, than in Fact we find them

P. 20, 21.

“ to be.”
 I earnestly beg the favour of my Reader to at-
 tend carefully to what Mr. Seagrave has here ad-
 vanced ; viz. that humane nature, by virtue of
 free will, or by the use of his Faculties and Rea-
 son, has neither an ability or possibility of believing,
 and of becoming virtuous ! — Give me leave then
 to answer his Question before I throw it back to
 him. His Question you see is, What reason can
 be render’d why mankind is not more believing
 and more virtuous ? I answer, he has told us that
 there is an unanswerable reason, viz. BECAUSE THEY
 CAN’T. They have it not in their power, there
 is not so much as a possibility on their parts, of be-
 ing otherwise. Now I’ll return the Question ; pray
 let Mr. S. and the upholders of this old doctrine,
 render a reason why that supernatural assistance
 is not given them ? Or what blame belongs to
 mankind for believing no more, or being no more
 virtuous than we find them ? Let such hugg their

old

old Systems and welcome; my reason tells me, and revelation confirms the truth of it, that God is not like an Egyptian task-master that require a brick without straw; man can only, and will only, be accountable for what he hath, not for what he hath not? No law can oblige any farther than the subject is capable of observing it; and where there is no capacity or ability, no Law can possibly become a rule of action; so that mankind having neither an ability or possibility of believing or becoming virtuous, cannot be esteem'd criminal for not being what they could not be. So that if there be any blame due on account of there being no more faith or virtue in the world, I am afraid, upon our Author's scheme, it will wholly fall upon God, and then no doubt he may have reason to glory in the antiquity of his divinity: since it will claim the Serpent for its Author, who began with laying the blame upon the Creator, (for denying the Tree of Knowledge,) when he persuaded Mother Eve to Taste the forbidden fruit. See, Gen. iii. 4, 5. So that such doctrine, if to be valued for its antiquity, is almost coeval with the creation of man.

That I may more fully expose this Tenet of our Author's, I shall consider such texts of Scripture as he has thought fit to introduce in support of it.

And the first Text he introduceth, is, *The natural man discerneth not the things that be of God.* The whole verse runs thus, But the natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know

them

them, because they are spiritually discerned. This is one of the Scriptures, which, he says, appears express for him.

Perhaps not so very express; for by *natural man* *φύσις ἀνθρώπου*, is plainly to be understood, the *animal*, or *sensual man*; a man governed by custom, ill habits, or the lower, *i. e.* the animal nature; a man so under the influence of prejudice or prepossession; as that he could not receive the things of the spirit of God, *i. e.* the Christian Doctrine. It could not intend a man strictly pursuing nature, or the law of his make: or a man that made right use of those capacities which God had endow'd him with: it must intend *nature* perverted by custom and habit: and the word will not admit of any other reading than the *sensualist* oppos'd to the rational man. So we find the word *φύσις*, which signifies either Nature or Custom, made use of to express *custom*; does not even *nature* itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him. And so again *φύσις* is used for custom and ill habits. And were *by nature* children of wrath, *i. e.* by custom; forasmuch as they are laid to walk according to the *course*, the *way* or age, or life of the age of this world. They were under the directions of the lusts of the flesh, or such musings or willings which the lusts of the flesh excite. Now except this will prove it to be the unavoidable state and condition of all men, considered merely as men, without the aid of *supernatural assistance*, (by which I understand some violence

violence offered to their powers, or an irresistible impulse upon their wills) it will prove nothing.

The *natural man*, ver. 12. is the man that is of a *worldly spirit*, in opposition to the spirit which is of God.—We have not, *says the Apostle*, received the spirit of *the world*—and judged, It could be nothing else but some criminal prejudices that obstructed the reception of the Christian doctrine, under the pure and apostolical dispensation, or publication of it. So again, such a man is call'd *natural* in opposition to the *Christian*, who is call'd *spiritual*; as having embraced that pure and holy doctrine, and as partaking of the extraordinary gifts of the spirit. For he adds, ver. 16. Who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? *i. e.* who of those *natural men*, that have not embraced Christianity, hath known any thing of the mind of Christ, by which he can be enabled to give a spiritual man, *i. e.* a *Christian*, any instructions in it? It is, *q. d.* altogether ridiculous for such a man to pretend to it; — but we have the mind of Christ. He goes on Ch. iii. to tell even his *Corinthian* converts, whom he calls *Brethren*, that he could not speak to them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ; *i. e.* as to men who had not gone far in their compliance with the pure design of the Christian doctrine, but remained yet under very criminal dispositions; for whereas there was among them *envying*, *strifes*, *uncharitable divisions*, or *factions*, are ye not, says he, *carnal*

*car*nal and walk as men? or according to the *na*tural man.

There is another passage of like import of *St. Paul's*, viz. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them
 2 Cor. iv. that are lost; i. e. the Gospel is *overcast* to them who
 3. have effaced, weaken'd or destroy'd their reason-
 ing faculties; as those had done, who had made
 this world their God: of whom it was pertinently
 said by *St. Paul*, that the God of this world
 had blinded the minds of them which believed
 Ver. 4. not, or their minds were blinded by making this
 world their God. Now how could the Apostle
 with any propriety mention an animal or sensual
 man, if all men were animal and sensual men? or
 how could he talk of the God of this world blind-
 ing the minds of such men that believed not, if
 human nature has no *ability*, or *possibility* of be-
 lieving? or if the minds of men were originally
 blind?

His next Scripture passage is, *Except a man be*
 Joh. iii. 3. *born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

As this Text has been look'd upon by the *Cal-*
vinists as the pillar and ground of their doctrine
 of *Supernatural Assistance*, to which cause we are
 to understand, that the return of a sinner to the
 path of truth is wholly owing; or in the words
 of our Author, "That no man has any *ability*
 " or *possibility*, by virtue of free-will, either of
 " believing or becoming virtuous; for no man
 " contributes properly the *least grain* to his own
 " salvation." As this Text, I say, has been the
 corner stone to the several parts of this scheme, I
 shall

shall endeavour to settle its true and genuine sense, in the best manner I can. Let it then be consider'd, that these are the words of our Saviour to *Nicodemus*, who was not only a *Pharisee*, but a *Ruler* among the *Jews*. They are a reply to *Nicodemus's* confession, that Christ was a Teacher come from God. And we find that *Nicodemus* understood them in the gross and literal sense; for he says—How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? *Jesus* replies—except a man be born of *water* and of the *spirit*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. For that which is born of the flesh, is flesh—*q. d.* couldst thou be born over again in the gross sense, ever so often, thou wouldst still be introduced in the same circumstances that thou wast; or couldst thou be born again of thy mother, that would not at all add to thy claims to the Kingdom of the Messiah; thou couldst only plead thy being a *Jew*, and a descendant of *Abraham* according to the flesh. But what fiteth and disposeth for an admission into the Messiah's Kingdom, relates to the disposition and frame of the mind: that which is born of the spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. This manner of reply in our Lord, discovers great wisdom and address; for *Nicodemus*, as a *Jew*, had an high opinion of his descent, inasmuch as he was one of the posterity of *Abraham*, that *Friend of God*, to whom such great promises had been made; so that he imagin'd he must needs

Joh. i. 12,
13.

have an undoubted and sole right to the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom by *birth* and *blood*. This prejudice, common among the *Jews*, St. *John* early attacks, by describing the condition by which men were introduced into the Kingdom of the Messiah,—as many says he, as received him, even of the *Jews*, to them gave he power, (or a right of admission,) to become the sons of God, to them that believe on his name. The right he gave them, they had no claim to from boasted genealogy, or descent; for even these *Jews* were *born*, or initiated into this his Kingdom, not of *blood*, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; *q. d.* not by sacrifices, nor by natural descent from *Abraham*, nor by being adopted, or proselyted into the family of the *Jews*; but this right of initiation by a Faith, is of God. Don't wonder at this, *Nicodemus*, that you *Jews* must be born again, or admitted into the *Messiah's* Kingdom upon quite another foot than your claim of descent. That Kingdom is not to be set up only for you: for as the wind bloweth from all quarters or points of the compass, nor any knows its origine or spread, so shall be the subjects of that Kingdom, or those who are born of the spirit. *Nicodemus* seems yet surpriz'd, and asks, how can these things be? Our Lord says, art thou a *Master* in *Israel*, and knowest not these things? Thou a *Master*! and hast not read, in one of your own Prophets, that the *Messiah* shall bring forth judgment to the *Gentiles*—and that the *isles* should wait for his Law—that

he

He would give him for a Covenant to the people, for a light of the Gentiles, — that he might be God's salvation unto the end of the earth — that he would make all his mountains an high-way, and his high ways should be exalted, — and behold, these shall come from far, and so, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of *Sinim*. Agreeable to which, our Lord tells the unbelieving *Jews*, that they should see *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the prophets, and men from the east, and the west, and from the north and the south, sit down in the Kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out, even of the Kingdom of future glory. So that these their prejudices were very fatal to many of that nation. And it appears plain, that they were strangely rooted in them. The *Baptist* begun to lay his ax at the root of them: Think not, says he to the *Pharisees* and *Saducees*, to say within yourselves, we are safe enough, we have *Abraham* to our Father, — for nothing less than bringing forth fruits meet to repentance, will be of any service to you. Thus the metaphor of the wind appears very apposite to the end it is brought for; and nothing less than the prejudice it is design'd to correct could have made a *Master in Israel* mistake so much the extent of the *Messiah's* Kingdom.

Our Lord goes on to correct the mistake, and remove the prejudice, by telling him that what he spoke he knew, and testified what he had seen, viz. that several of the *Jews* had actually laid aside their prejudices, and honestly attended to his

If. chap. xlii, and xlix.

Luk. xiii.

Math. iii. 7, 8, 9.

his doctrine, and receiv'd and embraced it, yea, had submitted to Baptism, or a publick initiation into this last and most spiritual Dispensation which he was introducing: altho' *Nicodemus* did not yet receive this his Testimony. — The farther to rouse up his consideration, he asks him, if I have told you of *earthly things*, or things belonging to your Constitution, (for it was a common metaphor made use of among the *Jews*, upon the proselytism of any *Gentile*, they said, that he was regenerated, or born again,) if I speak to you *g. d.* in your own familiar dialect, and you don't perceive what I intend, or believe it; how wou'd you believe if I was to speak to you of my Kingdom in a plain manner, and let you at once see the whole design of it. That this is the true meaning of *heavenly things*, will appear confirm'd from St. *Paul's* frequent description of the *Jew's*. O Economy as earthly, and carnal, and worldly; and of the *Christian* dispensation as a more exalted constitution of things. Besides, our Lord usually describes the Gospel state, by the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

Perhaps here it would not be amiss to take notice, that the word *ἀνωθεν* translated *again*, (*born again*,) might be very properly render'd *above*, signifying a superior dispensation; and so it wou'd be read, born above, or initiated into a more exalted Kingdom than your present Theocracy. So the word *above*, elsewhere, evidently signifies the Gospel dispensation. If ye, says the Apostle, be risen with Christ (*συνεγερθέντες*), be raised to, or privileged

leged with the Christian doctrine,) seek those things which are *above*, *i. e.* which belong to that dispensation. Set your affections, your minds, your hearts, on things belonging to that Kingdom, not on the earth; *i. e.* not on things belonging to the Jewish Constitution.

Thus have I took notice, not only of what our Saviour might mean by a person's being regenerated, or born again; but I have likewise hinted at the means or qualification for such regeneration; and that I shew'd was faith. For to such gave he power, or a right, to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name. That the word *power* translated power, signifies right, reason, or claim, will appear not only from the nature of the subject to which it is applied, but also from its being so used by the same *John xix.* *Writer*: as when he tells us that *Jesus* declared to *Pilate* that he could have no power at all against him, except it was given him from above: *q. d.* thou knowest there is no reason on which thou couldst found thine authority, to pass sentence of death upon me, nothing to vindicate thy conduct in doing so, no manner of pretence, but what the *high Priest*, and *Sanbedrim* have given thee. — *Pilate* had before confest as much, *viz.* that he found *no* Ver. 6, *said in him*. But the *Chief Priests*, and head of the Jewish nation, tell him, that they had a Law, and by their Law he ought to die, for he made himself the son of God. By power here cannot be meant any thing derived from the Deity, inas- Ver. 7. much as it would follow that if, *from above*, re-
spected

spected God, * then Jesus would charge God with the greater sin, in delivering him by virtue of that power. — on the contrary, it is *his* *therefore*, or *because of this* wicked proceeding of the heads of my own countrymen, to whom I am subject as a Jew, that their guilt is the greater! They have been again and again told by you that *I am innocent*, and this is a farther aggravation of their sin. — I have chosen to be so particular on this passage, as it may give some farther light into the subject; and by so doing, apologize for the digression.

To proceed, *Faith* was the condition of his claim to the privileges of the Messiah's Kingdom, and as such, appears to be a moral temper of mind, or something within the power of man to perform, as he is a creature of God, and made a capable subject of moral Government. That this is the very case, will farther appear, from the instruction which our Saviour gives Nicodemus: *He that believeth on the Son is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.* If this intended only an assent to the truth of a doctrine of which the evidence was apparent, or a non assent to the truth of the same doctrine, concerning which the evidence had not sufficiently appear'd, this would impeach the equity and wisdom of the Constitution; inasmuch, as such assent or dissent is unavoidable. Therefore this would admit of

• It may be worthy remark, that Tindal Pag. 337, of his *Christianity as old as the hills*, &c. has attended to the Calvinistical sense of this passage, — as if it was the sense of the Letter.

no sanctions, either of reward or punishment. It must refer to an integrity, or honesty of mind, in attending to the evidences of truth, and to a criminal neglect of such attendance. And our Lord told *Nicodemus*, that he meant no less than this by *believing*, and not *believing*: for he adds, *And* Ver. 19; *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the* 20. *world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. A doer of evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd, or appear in their true light, in which he cares not to behold them.*

Now such a subjection and captivity to vice, must, so long as it continues, unfit for the possession of any degree of real happiness. And therefore this *constitution* appeared highly fit, worthy of God, and consistent with the eternal and invariable laws of reason and truth. Nor can we reasonably suppose that any thing less than criminal prejudice could have prevented the *Jews* from receiving the doctrine of Christ; which refusal is surprising, for *Judea* was, by his publick ministry, become the very Theatre of miracles! There was no *inferior evidence* of his divine mission, to that of *Moses*, in whom they believed; and in whom they gloried, as the prophet of God! They were always fond of referring to his miracles, or those wonderful things God had done by him, in opposition to our Saviour: And on account of those miracles they were established in their high veneration and regard for *Moses*. Moreover, by the miracles which our Lord did among them, he proved

H himself

himself to be the person to whom *Moses* had referred, whom God would raise up like to himself; whom they ought to attend as the great prophet, and sent of God: Add we yet, his doctrine being in itself founded on the highest reason and fitness, and as every way worthy of God, it is very strange they should give no more attention. But *Jesus* saw their bigotry and prepossession and therefore expresses himself in the strongest manner. Thus does it appear that this declaration was proper to pluck up and destroy the prejudice of this people, who imagin'd all the world would be damn'd but themselves; and therefore our Lord declares, that 'God so loved the world, or *Gentiles*, that whoever of them should honestly attend to, and receive his doctrine, should have eternal life; at the same time, every *Jew* that disbelieved, should as fully, and as certainly as any wicked *Heathen*, be damn'd.' But had our *L.H.'s* doctrine been true, the coming of the *Messiah* had been no blessing at all to the world. To what purpose this declaration of the *unconfined benevolence* of the Deity? as that *God so loved the World!* It could have had no effect upon man at all. His *belief*, and his *virtue*, must be effected by a *supernatural assistance*, i. e. as I suppose, he must have *new powers*, and *new faculties* wrought in him: or else the old ones, must be put into a *new motion*, by an *irresistible impulse*! So that to talk of *Christ's* setting an example, or of his giving out precepts, or promises and threatnings, was all to no purpose; for if man

had

H

had

had not this *supernatural assistance*, those previous acts of mercy, ceased to be so; and man must be damn'd for want of these *supernatural assistances*, tho' he knew not how to come at them, or, in other words, be esteemed unworthy of eternal life, for not making use of those *previous directions*, at the same time, it was impossible for him to make any the least use of them.

The result of all, if I understand this *Letter Writer*, is, that whatever is requisite, either *with* us, or *without* us, to make us meet for happiness, is not the effect of any *endeavour* of our own: but we are wholly passive in the affair of salvation. Now, in what manner we shall be capable subjects of *happiness*, upon this hypothesis, any more than of *punishment*, I cannot understand.

The *third Text* he mentions, is, "*No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me,*" Joh. vi. 44.
"*draw him.*"

So our Saviour says, That I, if I be lifted up, will *draw* all men after me. The *verb* is in Ch. xii. 32.
both places, *ἐλκε*, and signifies to allure, or lead,

provoke, or entice: it does not necessarily, nor with any propriety in this place, imply force; for did it so, then in the last mention'd place, *all men* would by a *supernatural, irresistible impulse* be drawn after Christ. Besides, we are told by St. Paul, that there would arise from among the Christians at *Ephesus*, men that would speak *perverse* things, to *draw* away disciples after them.

The word is not indeed the same, but it is of more Act. xx. 30.
power,

power, ~~and~~ to draw, or pull away by force. Now, if by no man's being able to come to the Son except the *Father* draw him, be meant of a necessitating physical impulse, then the same must be meant of our Saviour's being lifted up, or crucify'd on the Cross, *drawing all men*; and then *all men* being under the same inevitable necessity of being saved, must *all* be saved. And yet at the same time, the men at *Ephesus*, that spoke perverse things, would *draw* men after them, which would pervert and destroy the truth of those other accounts: or else be of no manner of signification.

If we then would form any rational or intelligible Idea of no man's being able to come to Christ except the *Father* draw him, we must understand it of the *Testimonials* which God gave of the divine Mission of his Son, which if unattended to, would render ineffectual all his address to a people who were under the strongest prejudices. He refers them, we find, all along to the testimony of his Father, *if I do not the works of my Father*, says he, *believe me not*; but if I do, tho' ye believe not me, *believe the works*, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. *q. d.*

Joh. x.
27, 28.

If those instances of power which you have seen attend my ministration, don't appear, both in the nature, and application of them, to be of divine original, and agreeable to the direction of infinite wisdom, and goodness; if there appears any thing of trick, juggle, art, or imposture in them, if you find they have any tendency to serve diabolical, or evil purposes, (upon

a fair

(a fair examination,) I would have you reject them, you'll act a reasonable part in doing so: But if, on the contrary, they are of such a nature, as even when considered, to *constrain* you to own that no man could do the works that I do, except God was with him; then, act an honest part, consider what this will prove. And altho' your prejudices won't yet suffer you to receive me as the *Son of God*, or *Messiah*, yet if you attend with care to what conceptions you have already form'd of my works, the natural consequence will be, that you will discern and be convinced that the Father *is* in me, and I in him. But if they would not consider and attend to these evidences of his being the Messiah, or son of God, they cou'd never come to him, or become the subjects of his Kingdom.

For a farther illustration, let it be remark'd, that our Lord tells the multitude, That if any did come to him, and did not hate his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, &c. and his own life, he cou'd not be his disciple: *i. e.* except such a one did not prefer his being a disciple of Jesus, to such natural affections and ties of relation, he could not; because, a *greater love* to such relations, who disliked his doctrine, would be an effectual bar to their adhering to Jesus; or becoming his disciples. Or if a man's love to his life was preferable, or had a first place, to his love to Jesus and his doctrine, in such a state of opposition and persecution, this would be an effectual bar. Not that men were under any physical incapacity

capacity of coming to Christ, or of becoming his disciples; but it required a prevailing love and regard to truth, or they could not: Any criminal biasse towards this world would prevent them.

In this sense we are told, that a *Camel* might as easily go thro' the *needle's eye*, as a rich man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, or sincerely embrace the Christian doctrine: inasmuch as the circumstances that attended the publication of this doctrine required the parting with them. And tho' this declaration of our Lord's about *rich men*, astonish'd the disciples; and made them ask, who then can be saved? yet we find our Lord explaining this matter by telling them; *That with men this was impossible, but with God all things are possible.* Which is plainly understood, as

Mat. xix.

Mar. x.

27.

St. Mark has put it, *ταγα ανθρωποις αδυνατον, αλλ' επι θεου παντα δυνατα εστι* *ταγα το θεου.* i. e.

Weakness or Impotence is from men, but not from God, for all power is from God. *q. d.* 'This wrong disposition in men to trust in their riches, and prefer them to a love of truth, is the fruit of man's own invention, it don't result from the law of his maker: For God has endowed him with reason and understanding, which could never determine him to prefer a present outward enjoyment to truth, or the love of it.'

Once more, Jesus had before explained what he meant by men's *not being able* to come to him, except the Father drew them; by declaring the

Joh. v. 40.

reason to be, because they *would not*. So that it was fitly said of the *Jews*, they could not come

to Christ, viz. because they would not, or were under criminal biases: But it never could be said that they were criminal in not coming to him, if they could not, or had no capacity.

We may remark farther against the doctrine of this *L. W.* with regard to *supernatural assistance*, that even those most evident instances of *supernatural power*, by which *Jesus* both wrought himself, and enabled his disciples to work miracles, had in them no degree of physical or irresistible impulse upon the minds of men. The address they made to men, was no more, at farthest, than *moral suasion*, or an appeal to their understandings by the medium of their senses: And altho' many miraculous gifts were bestow'd upon the Apostles and first Converts to Christianity, who were thus *born again*, or *from above*, or initiated into this exalted dispensation by the *spirit*, as well as by *baptism of water*, yet this was no part of their *holiness*, or *religious character*, or term of justification before God; for *charity*, or a sincere and extensive love of God and others, was declared by *St. Paul* to be of a more excellent nature, and as what would *endure*, when these had all ceas'd, vanished away, and become altogether useless. See 1 Cor. xiii.

Nor does this deny, but that the *Gospel Revelation* was an extraordinary assistance, and help to mankind, in point of Salvation. It was so, as it discover'd *Truth* in all its branches, which could possibly concern the recovery of human nature to the greatest perfection and happiness. *Jesus*, that great Teacher sent from God, taught men both by

by precept and example the way to the Father. He threw off and exposed the several *disguises* and *coverings*, that men had introduced by their *inventions*, and detected the several evil sources from which *superstition* and *vice* had derived. He brought to light the certainty of God's gracious design of reversing the *sentence of death* due to transgression, in a manner, and on such conditions as can vindicate every perfection of the Deity; and which renders him the most amiable object of humane Hope and Trust! All the Scheme of his *publick ministry*, was one continued series of such manifestation of the divine Philanthropy! and his *Exit*, even by blood, heighten'd the evidence!

But then here is not in all this, the least degree of physical violence on men. Had such *supernatural assistances*, as our *L. W.* describes, been necessary to effect the salvation of men; and had their *justification* been on so arbitrary a foot as that of his *mere will* and *pleasure*, without any regard to the moral fitness of the subject, why did the *word* take flesh? and what discovery of Grace, has the *word incarnate* made? surely none; but the contrary.

Indeed, on the other hand, there are many passages which mention men's *incapacity*, and intimations are made of *extraordinary* and *supernatural assistances* given in; or promises of supply for such defects. But then I am perswaded we shall find upon examination, that they are all out of the Question, with regard to the *moral Character* of men,

men, and that they were not any foundation of their justification before God.

I shall with all possible conciseness, take notice of some of the most remarkable of them.

And that condition in which our Lord sent out first his twelve Apostles, and afterwards the 70 Disciples, viz. without any provision for their journeyings, in which they were to be exposed as Lambs among Wolves; was a circumstance, that may come under the head of *supernatural assistances*. But then as the circumstances and reasons which made this command proper and fit, were extraordinary and peculiar; so it is not a case transferrable, at least, to any general rule: but will be accounted for upon the equity of God's moral Government, viz. that where his providence, and the great designs of it, unavoidably introduce such incapacities of common support; there he usually, I might say always, vouchsafes a supply in a manner suitable to such exigencies.

A like case we have, in the disciples being commanded by our Lord, not to *premeditate* what they should say in their own defence, when hauled or carried before *Magistrates*, for they were to be instantly instructed by the holy spirit.

So St. Paul had the promise of extraordinary aid, to enable him to preach the Gospel acceptably, notwithstanding that his great infirmity, call'd, *a thorn in his flesh*, and messenger of Satan: God promised that his Grace should be sufficient for him.

Luk. xii.
11, 12.
2 Cor.
xii. 7, 9.

Upon

Upon this very principle, St. Paul encourages the *Corinthians* to bear the sufferings to which they were exposed, because God is faithful, who would not suffer them to be tempted above that they were able.

1 Cor. x.
13.

And in his Epistle to the *Romans*, he not only endeavours to reconcile their resignation to the will of God, under their sufferings, by assuring them, that the *Spirit* would help their infirmities, in such a perilous condition, in which they knew not how, or what to ask; but he sets before them a future immortality of happiness, as overbalancing the account of present sufferings; and adds, the certainty of God's conducting things for the best, to the sincere and upright.

Rom. viii.
18, 26, &
28. comp.

And for this very purpose, was the *Captain of our Salvation* made perfect thro' sufferings;—that he might be able to succour them that are tempted.

It may here be objected, that we have the Apostle speaking of an *inability* to think any thing as of our selves, i. e. even the Apostles, were not sufficient of themselves, to think any thing as of themselves: but that their sufficiency was of God. To

2 Cor. iii.
5.

reach the undoubted meaning of which passage, we must take in the context: and we find the Apostle asserting of the *Corinthian Converts*, 'that they were
' his epistle written in his heart, and manifestly
' declared to be the epistle of Christ, i. e. such as
' had the doctrine of Christ expressly engraven upon them, (thro' his ministry) which impressions
' of Christian truth, had not been made upon
' them

Jer. xxxi.
33, 34.
accompl.

them with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; extraordinary gifts having confirm'd that doctrine: nor were these documents engraven on tables of stone, as the *Jewish* Decalogue was, but on fleshly tables of the heart. Such was his trust or hope concerning them, — not that he, or any of the other Apostles were able of themselves, or sufficient as of themselves for such purposes, as making any part of the Christian scheme from their own heads; no, St. Paul esteemed all that furniture of *Jewish* learning he had before his conversion, as dross, to the knowledge of the Christian Scheme, which was immediately communicated to him by Christ; neither could he, or any other Apostle, have imparted to these *Corinthians*, the Holy Spirit, as of themselves; *this their sufficiency was of God*, who had thus made them *able* ministers of the *New Testament*: not like the *Judaizing Teacher*, who was for having them mix the mosaick rites and ceremonies with Christianity, and gloried in his eloquence, notwithstanding he cou'd not impart these extraordinary gifts. But we are made able ministers, not of the *Letter*, i. e. not of the *Jewish* constitution, under which the *ministration of death*, was as deeply written and engraven, as, even the Law itself, or any precept of it; we are not ministers of such a dispensation! To be such, is a character will suit well enough the *Judaizing Teacher*. On the other hand, we are ministers of the spirit! And how great is the difference? The *Letter*, or *Jewish Constitution*,

‘ you plainly see, *kills* ; makes no provision for
 ‘ the reversal of the sentence of death upon trans-
 ‘ gression ; but the *Spirit* giveth *Life* ; i. e. the
 ‘ gospel dispensation has brought life and immor-
 ‘ tality to light : and has ascertain’d the propiti-
 ‘ ous and benign disposition of the Deity to man-
 ‘ kind. What, inconceivably, higher degrees of
 ‘ glory must attend this dispensation, than ever
 ‘ attended that of *Moses* ! —

Thus *St. Paul*, by the *LETTER*, plainly meant,
 the *Mosaick* dispensation, and by the *SPIRIT*, the
 Christian dispensation ; which if the Author of
Christianity as old as the Creation had attended to,
 might have spared him the trouble of certain
witicisms upon the *Holy Scriptures*, as that, p. 66.
 — ‘ And tho’ we were certain of the Letter, even
 ‘ *the Letter killeth*. P. 187. Sometimes the Let-
 ‘ ter of the Scripture is such an authority, as
 ‘ can’t be parted with, without sacrilege ; and
 ‘ sometimes ’tis a *Letter which killeth*. P. 201.
 ‘ The use of reason, absolutely necessary, in
 ‘ reading a book, where ’tis own’d that the *Let-
 ‘ ter killeth*. P. 207. *St. Gregory* the first is quo-
 ‘ ted, as saying the Scripture is not only dead,
 ‘ but deadly ; for it is written, *The Letter kills,
 ‘ but the Spirit quickens* ; and this is what the
 ‘ whole divine Letter does.—P. 332.—Nay, the
 ‘ Apostle himself says, *the Letter killeth*.’

The Apostle could not mean the letter of the
Christian doctrine killed,—for he calls it the word
 of salvation ; the word of reconciliation ; and
 that

that which brings salvation, and always mentions it as discovering life. I might indeed have added in confirmation of this sense of *Letter and Spirit*, (as signifying the *Law and Gospel*;) what the Apostle farther observes, viz. That they who continued to read *Moses*, had yet the vail upon their hearts; whereas, upon their turning to the *Lord*, or receiving and embracing Christianity, the vail would be taken away. And *the Lord is that Spirit*; — but I think enough has been offer'd. —

Ver. 15,
16, 17, 18.

It will now be proper to examine whether in case *Deism* is the crime of the age, it does not owe its rise, next to the IMMORAL LIVES and worldly views of the professors of Christianity, to this scheme of irrational and unnatural doctrines and principles, which Mr. *Seagrave* and some others would so strenuously recommend.

And this *L. W.* has given great ground of jealousy that this must be the case. For he expressly says, "That if *natural Religion* exists, will it not follow, according to the Deist, that revealed religion is a matter unnecessary? And if revealed Religion is a matter unnecessary? — as it must be, if the other is possibly sufficient: I own I cannot well see how the All-wise Being, who does nothing in vain, can be supposed to have made it. — And I cannot but think that *natural religion ought absolutely to be denied.*"

P. 23, 24.

This Author seems to be *Deistically* blind himself, in putting Divine Revelation upon the foot of necessity in God to make it. It has been confessed

AN APPEAL to the People,

essed by the best *Writers* in its defence, that the light of nature affords sufficient assistance and direction to enable mankind both to know and practice, what is their indispensable duty both to know and practice: and that men will be accepted according to what they have, and not according to what they have not; he has not in this case left himself without witness: But then this does no way contradict the *usefulness* of such revelation, which may express great benevolence and favour in the Deity, notwithstanding the *sufficiency* of natural Religion.

This fondness of debasing and injuring the *divine constitutions*, (in what is call'd the natural world,) in order to exalt any *special revelation* of his will, appears to be a very indefensible way of proceeding. Just as if *sinning* should be made necessary to exalt the divine goodness. It is no doubt true, that men have sadly deviated from the law of their make, and are born into the world under great disadvantages, not only from sensitive objects making their first address, but from early imbibed *prejudices*, which are also took in from a faulty education, and from evil examples; — but then supposing the circumstances of an *Heathen*, thus unavoidably situate, yet when we think on him as an accountable Being, and on the perfection of his *Maker* and *Judge*; we cannot but suppose, that whenever such an *Heathen* really becomes accountable, he must have powers suited to those several degrees of light which he has, and

and proportionate to every obligation that can flow from them.

Some degrees of light must be supposed granted him, or he could not be accountable for not seeing; — but whether this proportion of power, or sufficiency, which each individual is thus possessed of, results immediately from that *inspiration* of God which gave him understanding; or whether it is an inherent principle in him, *merely* as a descendant from *Adam*; or what other way he comes by it, I chuse not to determine; but would only maintain this, as a principle founded on the most evident fitness, viz. *That a man's power must be proportional to his obligation*; which I shall endeavour to demonstrate. To this purpose,

Let us now enquire into the constitution of *natural Religion*, in order to see how preposterous it is, for a man that pretends to be a Christian, to think, *it ought to be denied absolutely*.

Now the foundation of *Religion* lies in that difference between the acts of men, which distinguish them into *good, bad, and indifferent*.

That act which may be denominated morally good or evil, must be the act of a Being capable of distinguishing, choosing, and acting for himself; or more briefly, of an intelligent free agent.

For nothing is capable of no obligation: Or so far as any Being has no power or opportunity of doing any thing, so far it is incapable of any obligation to do it.

"Inanimate"

Woolaston's
Rel. of
Nat. del.
p. 7.

" Inanimate and unactive Beings are therefore
 " capable of no obligation.

" The obligations of Beings intelligent and
 " active, must be proportionable to their facul-
 " ties, powers, opportunities, and not more.

" To *endeavour*, may fitly express the use of
 " all the opportunities and powers, that any in-
 " telligent and active, but imperfect Being, has
 " to act. It follows,

Ibid. pag. 62, 63. " That the imputation of moral good and evil,
 " to Beings capable of understanding and acting,
 " must be in proportion to their endeavours.

Ibid. pag. 25. " If there be moral good and evil, distinguish-
 " ed as before, there is *religion*, and such as may
 " most properly be styled *natural*, i. e. Beings
 " capable of understanding and acting, are under
 " an obligation to *do* what ought not to be omit-
 " ted, and to *forbear* what ought not to be done.

" To such a Being nothing can be right
 " that interferes with reason, and nothing can
 " interfere with truth, but it must interfere
 " with reason. For whatever is known to be
 " true, reason either finds it, or allows it to be
 " such. And nothing can be taken for true, by
 " a rational Being, if he has a reason to the con-
 " trary. For such a creature to obey the law,
 " which the Author of his Being has given him,
 " is *religion*; — and by making this obedience to
 " result from the right use of his own natural fa-
 " culties, must be to him, his *natural Religion*.
 " A careful observation of truth, the way to
 " happiness, and the practice of reason, are in
 the

the issue the same thing. So that *natural Religion* is grounded upon this triple alliance or union of *Truth, Happiness, and Reason.* Thus much of that excellent Writer.

P. 52.

I shall add to this, the Testimony of the learned Dr. S. Clarke.

That there is a necessary and eternal difference in the *relations* that different things bear to one another: and that there is a consequent *fitness*, or *unfitness* of the application of different things or different relations one to another.

That the will of God is invariably determin'd by *justice, equity, goodness*: which *fitness* should constantly determine the wills of all subordinate rational Beings. — That these eternal and necessary differences of things, make it fit and reasonable for the creature so to act, even separate from the consideration of these rules being the *positive will or command of God.*

That they, notwithstanding, are more enforced by being consider'd as the positive will of the most perfect Being.

And that as such, an attendance or non-attendance to these eternal moral obligations, must certainly in the consequence be rewarded or punished by the supreme Being, as he cannot but approve the one, and disapprove the other.

Boyle's Lec.

7th Edit.

p. 148.

149.

That this eternal rule of equity, is that *right reason*, which makes the principal distinction between *men and beasts.*

This is the law of nature, which (as *Cicero* excellently expresses it) is of universal extent,

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and

An APPAL to the People,

and everlasting duration, which can neither be wholly abrogated, nor repealed in any part of it, nor have any law made contrary to it, nor be dispensed with by any authority, which was in force, before any Law was written, nor the foundation of any city or commonwealth was laid; which was not invented by the wit of man, nor established by the authority of any people; but its obligation was from eternity, and the force of it reaches throughout the universe: which being founded in the nature and reason of things, did not then begin to be a Law, when it was first written and enacted by men; but is of the same original with the eternal reasons or proportions of things, and the perfections or attributes of God himself; so that if there was no law at Rome against Rapes at that time that *Tarquinius* offered violence to *Lucretia*, it does not therefore follow that he was at all the more excusable, or that his sin against the eternal rule of equity was the less heinous. This is that law of nature, to which the reason of all men every where, as naturally and as necessarily assents, as all animals conspire in the motion of their heart and arteries, or as all men agree in their judgment, concerning the whiteness of snow, or the brightness of the sun.

Ibid. 211,
212, 213.

Let me now ask my *Author*, whether he is still of the same mind, that *natural religion* ought absolutely to be denied? Let him consider that reason is the very standard by which we try revelation; and of consequence, that whatever is true by reason,

reason, we are sure cannot be made false by revelation; and *vice versa*, nothing can appear true to us in revelation, which we discern to be false or contradictory to our reason. It is, I say, by this only, or in other words, it is by men's comparing any part of revelation with those eternal moral obligations, which result from the difference of things, that they can only determine it to be, or not be, the positive will of God. So that if *natural religion* be absolutely denied, *revealed religion* can have no possible foundation. And so far is it from being inconsistent with the character of the all-wise Being to make a revelation of his will, notwithstanding natural religion exists, that he could not have made any revelation of his will, that could be in the least *punſam*, inconsistent with *natural religion*. And I am fully perswaded that if the Christian Revelation be attended to without prejudice, and with a due degree of honesty, it will appear to be the most intelligible, plain, and perfect edition of the religion of nature in both its precepts and example, as well as attended with an exhibition of mercy, and favour, or of such *motives* as discover, with the greatest perspicuity, the perfection, and excellency of God's nature and government.—

Which leads me with concern to examine what may have been the chief causes of its small spread and success in the world; or in other words, what could hinder this expression of divine Love and Goodness, from becoming universally received.—

And how shocking is it to think that there is any

P. 404.

Burnet de
Fide
& Offic.
Christia-
norum,
p. 98.

foundation for such a remark as the Author of
Christianity as old as the Creation, has made.
 "What impartial man, says he, who has com-
 "pared the former and present condition of
 "mankind, can think the world is much mended
 "since the time of *Tiberius*; or tho' ever so well
 "vers'd in Church-History, can, from the con-
 "duct of Christians, find, that they are arrived
 "to any higher state of perfection, than the rest
 "of mankind; who are supposed to continue in
 "their degeneracy and corruption. What was
 "the opinion of a late eminent philosopher as
 "well as divine, is plain, by his saying, *Si re-*
 "*surgerent Philosophi & Gentilium sapientes, &*
 "*perlustrato orbe a vobis quærerent, quid profuerint*
 "*humano generi religio Christiana, quoad mores*
 "*vite probitatem? quoad pacem & bonum pub-*
 "*licum? nos utique appellatis Barbaros per op-*
 "*probrium: sed nobis barbaris quid præstatis vos*
 "*Christiani?*" i.e. What if the wisemen and philo-
 "sophers that have lived among the *Heathens* should
 "rise again from the dead, and from a diligent
 "survey of this globe, should ask us, of what
 "advantage has the Christian Religion been to man-
 "kind, with respect to probity of life and manners?
 "or with respect to peace and publick good? *they*
 "*might say indeed, you have call'd us Barbarians*
 "by way of reproach; but in what is it that you
 "Christians have excelled us Barbarians?

I say, what a melancholly thought does it sug-
 "gest, that when we look into Church-History,

we

we see the demand or challenge so difficult to be answered! —

But then, neither *Tindal* nor any other Gentleman that objects this, can pretend to Father it on the Spirit or Genius of the *Christian Example or Doctrine*: And it will no more remain an objection against the *Revolution* itself, than that wou'd be against the *tender mercies of God* being over all his Works, shou'd they object, that those *tender mercies* are so wantonly used, or abused by the generality of mankind.

It must be acknowledged, that the best things are capable of the greatest abuse. And that it is no wonder this godlike and truly divine dispensation has been hindred in its spread, by means of the vice and immorality of its Professors.

But next to this, the obstacle has been the impudence of men in imposing schemes of what they call'd *fundamental* and *essential* Doctrines of Christianity, that have contradicted and destroy'd the very foundation principles of all *natural Religion*.

What pity is it that this *Letter Writer*, when he mentioned the *Collins's* and the *Tindals*, did not consider how much Christianity had become the subject of their contempt, when in the dress of *Calvinism*?

Let him but turn his eye to *Tindal*, in his *Christianity as old as the Creation*, and take notice where he most severely banters what are called *Christian Doctrines*, and he'll most generally find them of the *Calvinistical Species*, particularly Page 388, 389, 390; where he attacks so strongly the

the Doctrine of original Sin, or the imputation of Adam's transgression; — that "*secret Corruption*" "in the *condition* of nature," which is, or seems to be, the *primum mobile* of the whole System.

The very notion of one Pair being created with an higher perfection of nature by far, than any of the succeeding generations of men; and for a state of probation, infinitely less difficult than that of his descendants, don't suit well the equitable and wise proceedings of the Deity. But to suppose that *first man* created with a freedom to good as well as evil, and that upon his choice of evil, all his descendants shou'd have a total privation of freedom to good, and yet be obnoxious to the same censure that *Adam* was, is to suppose God's ways unequal; and is in truth, in the words of *Tindal*, "a libel upon humane nature," and a high reflection upon the Wisdom and Goodness of its Author, in placing men without any fault of theirs, in an unavoidable state of degeneracy and corruption for 4000 Years together, and continuing (according to the *Calvinistical Scheme*) the greatest part still in the same."

But when men had by their *inventions*, found out this doctrine of imputation of sin and guilt, it became very natural for them to think of another sort of imputation, in order to remedy this evil, and to make the scheme uniform; for as the descendants of *Adam* cou'd not be made appear to be any agents in what they call the imputed original Sin, so they were determin'd to make man no agent at all in the imputed and *original* Righteousness

Righteousness: for so I wou'd call the Righteousness of Christ, in their Scheme. And as they thought the Sin of the one was with Justice imputed, so it was natural for them to think that the righteousness of the other shou'd be imputed; which if a true System, there wou'd appear to have been only two persons of the whole human family, that had any hand in either the wickedness and misery, or the righteousness and recovery of men.

I think with great propriety, this may be called, the *corrupt Source* of the *corrupt System* of Calvinism. And it may well offend all those who are persuaded, "that there is a Law of eternal rectitude planted in Man (in every man) at his very creation; and that no man can act contrary to it, but does Violence to himself, and sins against his make and constitution."

Christianity as old, &c. Page 363.

I say *Christianity* in the above dress, or as proposed by the *Calvinists*, must by such men as *Collins*, and *Tudal* be rejected, as unworthy the reception of *reasonable and moral agents*. And yet it cannot be denied, but that the *Advocates* for original Sin, as corrupting the whole species, have the sound of words on their side, in several places of Scripture.

It may be proper to single out one or two, which they have look'd upon as indisputable.

—Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one, said Job.

And our margin wou'd have compared with this, that expression of David.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in Sin did my Mother conceive, or warm me.

Job.

xiv. 4.

As to that of Job's, any careful reader will see

see

see, that by *clean* and *unclean* we must necessarily understand *immortal* and *mortal*. This the context determines.

Now as this is the undoubted sense of *Job*, that of *David* may be well explain'd by it, viz. that he was shapen in mortality, and conceived in pain. It is no unusual *metonymy* or figure of speech, to put the *cause* for the *effect*. If it shou'd be read literally, God, the *Former* of *David*, wou'd be chargeable with forming or shaping him in iniquity. And then there would have been no room for such an *exordium* of praise to his Maker, made by him, in *Psalms* cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. If it shou'd be referr'd to those wrong biases in the mind of *David*, then his Mother wou'd appear to be severely censured by him, in her over indulgence, or neglect of his education. Or, if it must be read, *shapen in Sin*, and *conceiv'd in Iniquity*, it cou'd only be intended to express *hyperbolically* the greatness of his guilt, *q. d.* my Sin has been as great as if I had been shapen in Sin, and conceiv'd in Iniquity, I cou'd not even then have been more wicked. Thus the Texts only appear to favour imputation of original Sin in the sound.

And if there was occasion, it might be prov'd that the *New Testament* writers, in the contrast they have put between *Adam* and *Christ*, have no reference to *Sin* or a *corruption of Nature*, but to the mortality of humane nature, as the certain consequence of this state of trial and imperfection, known by *Adam* the first man; and a reversal of the sentence, or appointment of Death, by a certain

certain discovery of future, happy, endless Life! known by Christ the second Adam.

Nevertheless it was, as I before hinted, very proper for men who were fond of such a corrupt System, to lay the foundation a sufficient depth in corruption. — But I proceed.

Our *L. W.* indeed tells us, that “the *Deists* are right in concluding *revealed Religion* unnecessary, if natural Religion exists:” but as I have shewn the fallacy of this conclusion, when *revealed Religion* is considered purely as it is; so I am afraid that he must be oblig’d to own, if he is possessed of any degree of honesty, that his *scheme*, which destroys the agency of Man, by inducing a foreign plea of personal rectitude, and condemning all natural Religion, has been that very cloathing put upon *revealed Religion*, which has made it so extremely deform’d and hateful to men of enquiry. Hereupon he’ll be convinc’d, that if *Deism* be the crime of the age, it will lye at the charge, not of the present *English Clergy*, who teach that the way to *Faith* and *Virtue* is by the use of a man’s faculties, and his Reason; that humane nature has by vertue of a *free will*, not only a *possibility*, but an actual *capacity* of believing and becoming pious and just; and that *Faith* is of no value in the point of justification before God, any farther than it regulates the temper and actions: He’ll perceive that instead of the charge fixing on the Clergy, it will fix on himself. Besides, shou’d our *L. W.* plead the authority of the *Doctors* of the Reformation, and the many famous men he refers to, yet if he’ll

Page 20.

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strictly examine into the *wickedness, inhumanity, and cruelty*, that has stain'd with a bloody die the character of the *professors of Christianity*, he may plainly discover, that it must arise in part from this principle of religious madness, *viz. that the Deity is a RESPECTOR OF PERSONS.* — To this source these iniquities owe their original; the People have been first deluded so far, as to call this, or the other scheme, *ORTHODOXY*; and to damn the differing Tenets as *Heresy, Schism, and Infidelity*; and that whatever the moral character, or the inward sincerity of the man may be, (of which they themselves can form no judgment,) yet these his Tenets being contrary to their received opinions of *Orthodoxy*, he must be unsound, and in a state of damnation: In this view, they are easily prevailed upon to regard such men as hated of God, as *enemies* to his Church and Kingdom: having made this advance, they soon become callous enough to resist all the dictates of nature, and all the precepts of moral virtue, and can even be persuaded, that they ought to hate these men, because they are told, *God hates them*; and that persecuting and destroying them under any shape of *inhuman severity*, wou'd be an act of extraordinary piety. Thus the prediction of our Lord is accomplish'd among the professors of Christianity themselves, who by their readiness to afflict and destroy one another, have intimated that they thought they *did God service*. This exactly tallies with the principles of rigid *Calvinism*, and is equally criminal whether it direct and influence

a *protest. Papist*, or a *Protestant*, or any of the different denominations of those who wear the Christian name: But whoever they be, they are deceivers or deceived, and true enemies to *Christianity*; which in the words of Bishop *Candler*,
 "is a Religion most worthy of God, most friendly
 "to society, most helpful to Government, and
 "most beneficial to every individual."

Introd. to
 Def. p. 2.

Upon the whole, it appears that notwithstanding all Mr. *Seagrave*, has advanc'd that *natural Religion* still exists, and must be the basis of any Revelation from God; and altho' all men by the light of nature, have a sufficient means of attaining the end of their beings, *viz.* Happiness; yet this does not destroy the fitness and usefulness of the Christian Revelation, any more than that mankind has in every age and nation been favour'd with one or another *great Man* or *Philosopher*, who has in some sense been an instrument in the hand of Providence, of reviving the neglected principles of *natural Religion*, and of censuring the spread of vice and superstition. Nor is the *Christian Revelation* vouchsafed to any, but under the notion of a farther *Talent* to be improved and answer'd for, than what attended the want of it: So that altho' this Revelation shou'd not become universal, yet none are injur'd that had no means of enjoying it, any more than any one man's, or number of men's being made with greater natural abilities and capacities than myself, is an injury to me, or an act of injustice in my Maker. — I am only accountable for what I receive. But then I wou'd

further observe, that it does not appear from any thing in this Revelation, that it is either unfit or unworthy of becoming the character of an *universal standard* of truth or religion: It, on the contrary, seems well adapted for the reception of the whole humane Family: and altho' it has not made so general a spread, or was not made to more parts of the world at once, the all-wise Being is not chargeable with *blame* on this account, any more than that he did not raise up a thousand *Socrates's* at the same time that he favour'd *Greece* with but only one.

No doubt those *wicked men*, who were causal of hindring the spread of religious Truth by the Christian Doctrine, will have an account to give *heavy enough* for such their wickedness; as well those, who by the immorality of their lives, as others, who by the new modelling of its principles and doctrines, have so disguised it, as to render it a Revelation unworthy of God to make, or of men to receive.

It wou'd, I am perswaded, give every sincere Christian a sensible pain, was he to read by what methods and disguises it not only has been propagated, but even is to this day.

What *Navarette*, a *Chinese* Missionary, said, with respect to the *manners* of the *European* Christians, who came into the *East-Indies*, and of the Converts made by the *Missionaries*; viz. "that
 " there are few converted in those parts where
 " they converse with the *Europeans*; and when
 " it happens that any are converted, they prove
 " so

"so bad, it were better they had never been baptised;" is too true: To which I wou'd add, ^{Christia-} I fear that the impure mixtures of *doctrinal prin-* ^{nity as} *ciples* with Christianity, by which the principles ^{old, &c.} of *natural Religion* have been contradicted, and even rooted up to give place to *Enthusiasm*, and *Superstition*; has had at least a second hand, not only in both the *Indies*, but every where else, in obstructing or hindring the success of those most rational and glorious Doctrines of that benevolent friend of Mankind, JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God!

I wou'd therefore, in the most sincere manner, advise Mr. *Seagrave* to review his *Letter address'd to the People of England*; and before he approves of what he has done, be well assur'd that his *old Divinity* is free from that *rust* and *canker* which has render'd it so unsafe and unsalutary to the minds of men: Or in other words, before he pretends to pull the mote out of the eyes of the *English Clergy*, let him implore some skilful hand to assist him in pulling the beam out of his own.

Having thus thrown back the accusation or charge upon Mr. *Seagrave*, the accuser of the Clergy:—To the *People of England* I wou'd now humbly appeal.

Judge you between the *L. W.* and me; and by an impartial examination of what I have offer'd, as well as of the following abstract of it, set in contrast, make your determination concerning us.

Whether, if the *L. W.'s old Method*, or *Calvinistical Scheme* of Doctrines, being made a *standard*

dard of preaching, from which the *English Clergy* ought never to vary; is not to destroy those two grand principles on which alone the *Reformation*, *Protestantism*, or even *CHRISTIANITY* itself can be supported; viz. the *Holy Scriptures*, being the only rule of Faith, and the right of *private Judgment* concerning the sense of them?

Whether *Faith only*, and that too, understood as a supernatural principle, or something distinct from, and above reason, can be the genuine method of Salvation?

Or on the other hand; you suppose, that for the very reason of Faith's being a distinct principle from, and above reason, it cannot be the genuine method of Salvation, or so much as a rule of action to man, as a reasonable Being?

Page 9. Whether *Faith* in the works of another, are with God the *entire motive* to our justification?

Or whether our own *personal rectitude*, or *righteousness*, tho' imperfect, does not give all that worth and value which our Faith can have in point of our Justification?

Whether the *Messiah*, by his personal virtue, fulfilled the moral Law perfectly, instead of *fallen* and still *corrupted* man; and so provided a *cleathing* of righteousness by which they only can be saved?

Or whether the notion of his doing this, as our *Substitute*, don't destroy all our ideas of the *Compassion*, and *Mercy*, or *Grace* of God; who wou'd not pardon without a full satisfaction; i. e. strictly speaking, wou'd not pardon at all: for the

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the most simple and plain Idea we have of *pardon* or *forgiveness*; implies an abatement of a just demand upon the pure motive of *mercy*; when applied to God: but if *perfect obedience* be the motive, this notion of *pardon* is lost, especially as this obedience becomes capable of being imputed or transfer'd to every one that is said to be pardon'd. Here *merit* takes place, and *grace* is no more *grace*.

But on the other hand, if we look upon *Justification*, or the gift of *eternal life*, as the promis'd reward of sincere, tho' imperfect obedience, which shall be confer'd by him whom God has appointed and authorized to raise men up from the dead; ^{Joh. xvii. 2.} This will preserve the Idea of *Grace* and *Favour* pure and unmix'd; and present to us the most undoubted *reason* of thanksgiving and of praise.

Whether the Salvation of a Christian being already effected, already finish'd, if at all, by Jesus Christ, even before men's works were wrought, or themselves born into the world, be any encouragement to *humane nature*, to exert its moral endeavours? at the same time that man cannot properly contribute the *least grain* to his own Salvation; and that *natural Religion* shou'd also be absolutely denied?

Or whether if such a doctrine be true, it be not necessary to have the Salvation effected for ALL, in order to render it a motive of glorifying God before men? because if Salvation was thus finish'd for only a *part of mankind*, it wou'd convey notions of God irreconcilable to *justice*, *equity*, and *mercy*?

mercy? And whether the *grace* of God is not more consistently represented by the Gospel, as it assures men that God will justify the *lover of righteousness*, tho' his righteousness be imperfect, and will reward with eternal Life all such who are influenced either by the *Christian Doctrine*, (or by the *religion of nature*,) to fear God, and work righteousness? This proves the very contrary of what the *L. W.* asserts; viz. that God is *no respecter of Persons*, or that there is *no respect of Persons with God*.

Whether you are of opinion that man cannot be converted, and come into *belief*, and into *virtue*, by the use of his faculties? Since if *human nature* by virtue of a free will, has an *ability* or *possibility* of believing, and of being virtuous, it will be difficult to account why no more of mankind believe, and are virtuous.

Or whether, if man cannot come into *belief* and *virtue*, by the use of his faculties or reason, or by virtue of his free will, he can be said any way to help his *unbelief* or *want of virtue*? And whether the *blame* must not then lye upon God?

It surely cannot at all mend the matter, to say the cause is some *secret corruption* in the condition of nature; forasmuch as what man can't help, he cannot be accountable for; *since Nothing has no obligation*.

Whether the will that is left us, is a will that is free, but not a will that is good? and whether such a will can be the effect of this *secret corruption*?

Or,

Or, on the contrary, whether humane nature don't appear to have naturally a prevailing bias or inclination to good? as appears from the violence that must be first offer'd to nature, before a man can transgress her precepts deliberately; for there must (every one experiences) be great degrees of previous violence, and opposition to the inward dictates of reason. And it must be so, since they which have no law, are a law unto themselves; shewing the work of the law in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing Rom. ii. one another. Besides this, you'll see that we can ^{14.} ^{15.} have no freedom at all in our wills, if it be not to good, as well as to evil. — Our *L.W.* indeed seems to have no Ideas that are rational, nor any distinct Ideas of freedom.

Whether, if *natural Religion* exists, or be possibly sufficient to direct men to Happiness, it will follow, that the all-wise Being, who does nothing in vain, cannot be supposed to have made a special Revelation of his will?

Or whether *natural Religion* must not necessarily exist, in order to be the basis of any revelation from God. Since natural Religion, or the dictates of nature, those eternal and moral differences in things; and the obligations that result from them, are the standard by which we alone can try revelation. And altho' the light of nature was sufficient, yet *Revelation* being no other than a revival thereof, together with a discovery of such motives to the practice of it, as are

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suitable

suitable to our state of Tryal; can no more be an impeachment either of the *wisdom* or *goodness* of God, than it is for him to have made innumerable orders of intelligent Beings; and a great diversity of capacities, and advantages imparted to the various individuals, or communities of them in each distinct *Species*.

To add no more, if my *fellow Subjects* shou'd join issue with me against Mr. *Seagrave*, then the present *Clergy* will not appear to be involv'd in the charge of encreasing *Deism*, by preaching *anti-calvinistical Doctrines*; and the *Verdict* will be given against this *L. W.* himself.

But inasmuch as I wou'd have no sentence pronounced that shou'd do him the least prejudice in any of his rights or privileges, either of mind, body, or estate; so I hope my *countrymen* will allow him to except against every Judge or *Juryman* that is directed *only* by the use of his *FACULTIES*, and his *REASON*, without any *new* and *extraordinary* or *supernatural assistance*; and then I am in hopes the majority will be thrown out from the Inquest or Inspection; and with those who remain of his own Stamp, he'll think himself very safe and happy.

To conclude,

If my Reader be acquainted with the *Liturgie* of our *Church*, he will perceive by the following Prayers, that what I have been contending for, is the true Spirit of her publick Devotion.

PRAYERS.

M,

in Defence of the CLERGY.

83

P R A Y E R S.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine Elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe we beseech thee to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy Laws, and in the works of thy Commandments, that thro' thy most mighty protection, both here and hereafter, we may be preserv'd in body and soul, thro' our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

STIR up we beseech thee O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people, that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of peace,
and

An APPEAL to the People, &c.

and of all virtues, without which whosoever lives is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THAT it may please God, to give to all the People of England, increase of Grace; and may they with meekness attend to the pure Doctrines of Christianity, receiving them with pure affection, even so as to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; and may it please him to bless and keep his People, to shew his mercy to all Men; and that it may please him to bring into the way of Truth all such as have erred and are deceived:

In the Prayer of your humble Servant

F I N I S.

*ERRORS committed by the Printer
to be Corrected.*

PAGE 8. l. 23. for *unjust*, r. *just*.
l. 24. for *mortality*, r. *immortality*.
l. 25. for *ζήσας* r. *ζήσαν*. P. 40. l. 23.
αἰῶνα r. *αἰῶνα*. P. 44. l. 17. for *by a faith*
by faith. P. 48. l. 12. for, *his reclaim* r. *claim*.
P. 70. l. 9. for *his descendants* r. *descendants*.